

END OF THE AMERICAN PROGRAMMER ■ AL-QAEDA: SPENT FORCE?

DECEMBER 6, 2004

The American Conservative

A BOON?

By John Zmirak

A BLOW?

By Doug Bandow

14 MILLION MIDDLE CLASS JOBS ARE NOW AT RISK OF BEING OUTSOURCED OVERSEAS. IS YOURS ONE OF THEM?

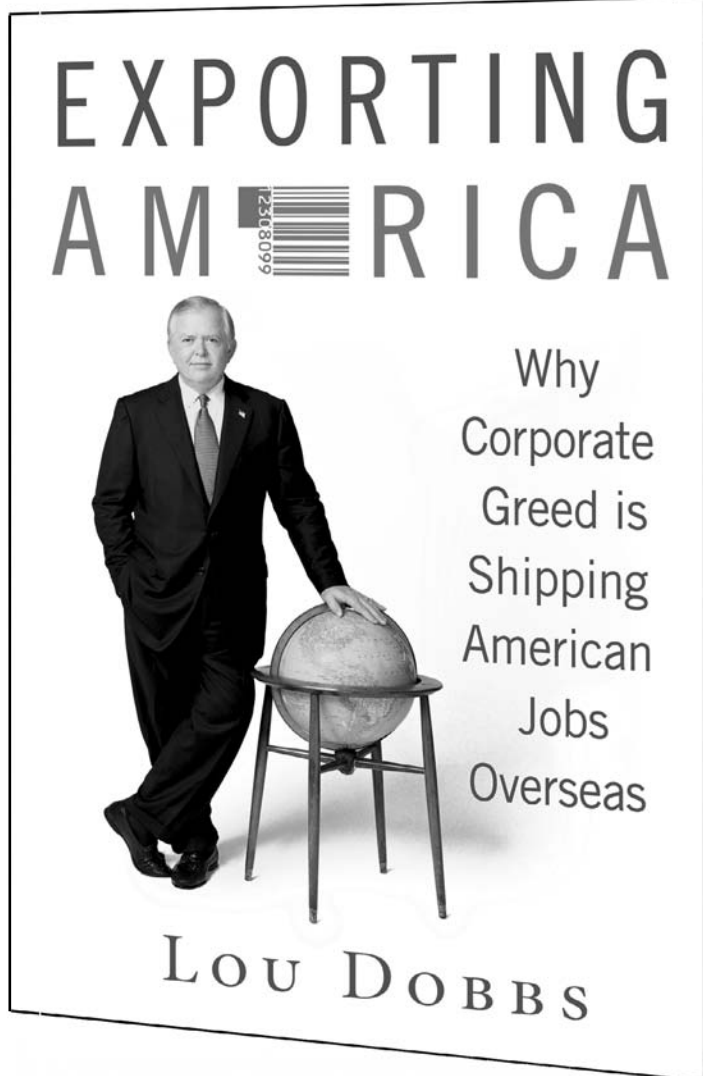
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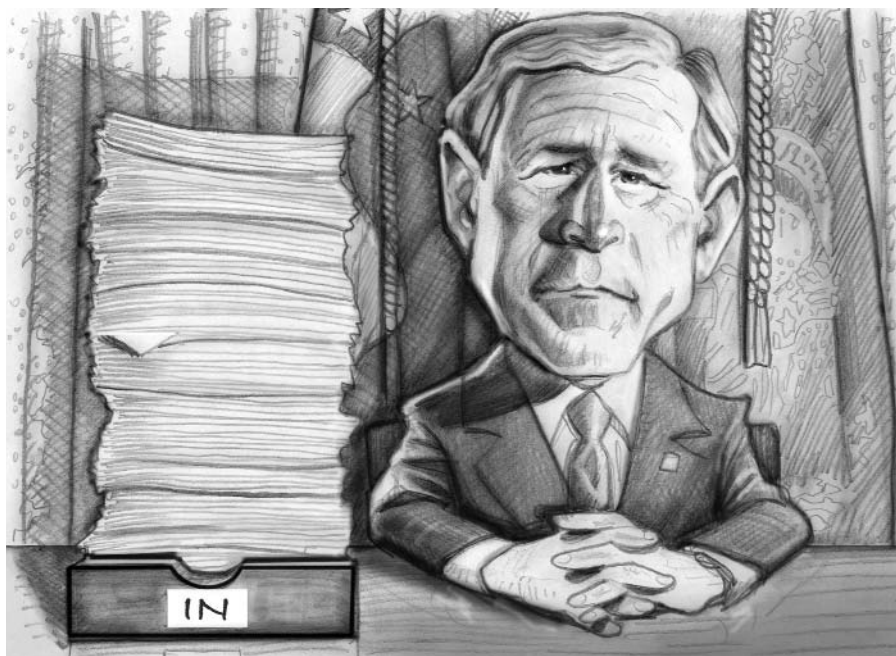
—Governor Mario Cuomo



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[COVER]

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[ELECTION]

WAR IS NOT A FAMILY VALUE

A perennial liberal cliché has it that GOP politicians run their campaigns on “values” and then blithely ignore the concerns of those who elect them. Values voters—so the argument goes—whether concerned about abortion or a semi-pornographic popular culture or defending the institution of marriage, are wooed by Republican politicians and then left standing at the altar.

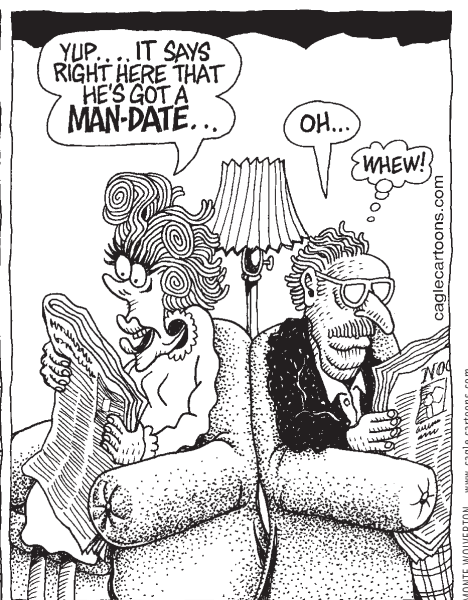
President Bush has an opportunity to disprove this. The president owes his win to voters concerned about moral issues—not to those who think it was great to invade Iraq and we must “stay the course.” Indeed, of those voters for whom the Iraq War mattered most, three-fourths voted for Kerry. If as many voters had thought Iraq was as important to their choice as moral issues, Kerry would have won the presidency.

In the coming weeks, we will learn whether the president will reward the masterminds of the Iraq invasion with new and higher positions and the opportunity to start new Mideast wars. (They are now pining for an American attack on Iran, and if not Iran, Syria.) Or will the president realize that most Muslim countries (actually most countries) don’t take well to being invaded, appoint some wiser figures to key foreign-policy posts, and devote some of his political capital to the domestic front? The preferences of his voters are clear.

[IMMIGRATION]

BORDER DISPUTE

Early reports have it that President Bush is making a first order of business resurrection of the amnesty for illegal aliens he floated last January. Open borders/cheap labor Republicans are cheered that the president supposedly increased his share of the Hispanic vote by nine points. “If we can shut up



the nativists, we can get a majority among Hispanics” one GOP blogger chortled.

Well, the so-called nativists—buttressed by overwhelming majorities of Americans, who want immigration laws enforced rather than subverted—are unlikely to be silenced. First, the nine-point Bush gain among Hispanics—from the same exit poll that touted a Kerry victory—is likely a chimera. The William Velasquez Institute, which also queried Latino voters leaving the polls, came to a quite different conclusion: a 68-31 percent Hispanic landslide for Kerry. Second, when voters had a chance to decide on immigration matters, they chose enforcement not amnesty. Proposition 200, the Arizona ballot initiative requiring proof of citizenship for receiving certain public benefits, passed overwhelmingly, despite opposition from both parties. And guess what? Hispanics voted for it too—47 percent, a much higher percentage than President Bush received. These voters understand, if the president doesn’t, that a massive and ceaseless influx of cheap labor imperils their own wages and security.

The Bush amnesty plan will signal the world that the United States has no intention of enforcing its own immigration laws—whoever can cross the border will be “legalized” eventually. Ronald Reagan said that a country that can’t control its borders isn’t a country anymore. Bush would do well to heed those words.

[STRATEGY]

OPPORTUNISM KNOCKS

In his acceptance speech, Bush thanked Karl Rove, the “architect” of his re-election campaign. But his unspoken gratitude should go to Massachusetts, not for offering up so weak an opponent, but for ensuring a second term with one grand judicial sweep.

After that state’s supreme court legalized gay marriage, mayors—most visibly San Francisco’s Gavin Newsom—began turning city halls into wedding chapels without legislative approval, much less popular consent. Before the ink had dried on Rosie O’Donnell’s marriage license, it was clear that the gay lobby had overplayed its hand. Legislatures stepped in to nullify the nuptials, Congress proposed a constitutional amendment affirming traditional marriage, and 11 states put same-sex marriage bans on their ballots. Calls to enlist in the culture war went out to the churches, and conservative Christians saddled up.

While pundits theorized about bad news from Baghdad, pollsters weighed manufacturing decline, and candidates spoke of Social Security, voters were deciding on a different basis. Bush’s architect was ready and rode the trend’s tail. Days before the election, voters began receiving phone calls linking John Kerry to “gay rights.” It worked. When the numbers were tallied, values votes made the president’s margin, and all 11 bans passed with majorities of 57 to 86 percent.

In truth, Bush and Kerry's positions are not clearly distinguishable. Kerry professed that marriage should be between a man and a woman. And just before the election—in a move that threatened to torpedo the stealth strategy—Bush affirmed his support for civil unions. But voters perceived a difference, and when pulling the lever to preserve our traditional social structure, trusted the Republican candidate.

Liberals smarting from a right hook they didn't anticipate grouse that this is the second time a court has handed Bush an election. But whatever he owes the Massachusetts supremes, the president's larger debt is to social conservatives—and they expect to collect.

[BELTWAY]

JUDGING SPECTER

Among the top priorities of those who voted on the basis of values are judges who share those values. But any hope of overturning *Roe v. Wade* is jeopardized by the man poised to become head of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Arlen Specter. Just a day after the election, Specter declared that the confirmation of nominees "who would change the right of a woman to choose, overturn *Roe v. Wade*" is "unlikely."

The Associated Press reported the senator's remarks under the heading "Specter warns Bush on high court nominations," though Specter soon backpedaled, claiming he merely meant that Democrats might filibuster pro-life nominees. Conservatives don't buy this, and a move is afoot to deny Specter the chairmanship. James Dobson, founder of Focus on the Family, said of Specter on ABC's "This Week," "He is a problem and he must be derailed."

Specter is not without support, however. Karl Rove says the senator "is entitled to his opinions" and puts a positive spin on the would-be chairman's comments, characterizing them as "pretty

plain. He told the president 'I will make certain your nominees receive a hearing, I'll make certain that they receive a vote, and appellate nominees will be brought to the floor.' We hope Rove's private counsel is sharper than his public comments.

[CULTURE]

LIFE-TIME COMMITMENT?

"Voters approved a ballot measure Tuesday to limit the privacy rights of girls," a Tallahassee television station reported the day after the election. Not exactly. By a 64-36 percent majority, Florida voters decided that the same laws that prevent a minor from getting her ears pierced or taking an aspirin at school should apply to abortion. State legislators had long tried to pass a parental notification bill, only to be blocked by the courts. But Florida's citizens were unambiguous in overriding the judges.

Pro-lifers fared less well on the West coast. While Bush and Kerry quarreled over whether to spend \$25 million or \$100 million on stem-cell research, California dwarfed both proposals by voting to devote \$3 billion. Proposition 71, buoyed by Governor Schwarzenegger's endorsement and a media blitz by famed geneticist Brad Pitt, won 59 percent of the vote. Lost beneath the promise of cures for everything from Parkinson's to paralysis is the fine print: "research" involves the cloning and destruction of human embryos. But voters were too busy mourning Superman to notice.

Whether President Bush's national agenda tracks closer to Florida's or California's remains to be seen. His first term was mixed: a relatively uncontroversial ban on partial-birth abortion and federal funding for research on existing stem-cell lines. This term, an early indicator of his pro-life commitment will be whether Bush regards Arlen Specter, for whom he campaigned, as an impediment or a useful scapegoat. ■

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The American Conservative, Vol. 3, No. 23, December 6, 2004 (ISSN 1540-966X). Reg. U.S. Pat. & Tm. Off. TAC is published 24 times per year, biweekly (except for January and August) for \$49.97 per year by The American Conservative, LLC, 1300 Wilson Blvd., Suite 120, Arlington, VA, 22209. Periodicals postage paid at Arlington, VA, and additional mailing offices. Printed in the United States of America. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The American Conservative*, P.O. Box 9030, Maple Shade, NJ 08052-9030.

Subscription rates: \$49.97 per year (24 issues) in the U.S., \$54.97 in Canada (U.S. funds), and \$69.97 other foreign (U.S. funds). Back issues: \$6.00 (prepaid) per copy in USA, \$7.00 in Canada (U.S. funds).

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Via Web: www.amconmag.com

By mail: *The American Conservative*, P.O. Box 9030, Maple Shade, NJ 08052-9030

When ordering a subscription please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery of your first issue and all subscription transactions.

Inquiries and letters the editor should be sent to letters@amconmag.com. For advertising sales/editorial call 703-875-7600.

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This issue went to press on November 11, 2004.

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The Mirage of Mideast Peace

George W. Bush says he has piled up lots of political capital and is now willing to spend it. Tony Blair is coming here to press Bush to spend that capital on the

Middle East conflict. And George H.W. Bush says Blair's message has been received "loud and clear": "Blair is correct, 100 percent correct. And I think he will find the president a willing and able partner, particularly if there is a change in leadership in the [Palestine Liberation Organization] that we can deal with more openly and with more confidence."

Hopes have thus been revived that, with Arafat passing on, at long last, a Mideast peace may be possible.

I do not believe it. I do not believe President Bush has the capital or will to make peace between Israel and the Palestinians. And before he starts down this road other presidents have traveled before, he should study the obstacles before him and decide whether it is not an endeavor that will consume all his capital and avail him nothing.

The elements of a just peace are known. Clinton was close at Camp David. Barak came close at Taba. Those elements are these:

An independent viable Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza with its capital in East Jerusalem. No Palestinian leader, no Arab leader, could sign on to less than this and survive. But the new state must be demilitarized. No fighter aircraft, artillery, or tanks.

While the state would have sovereignty over Islam's "Noble Sanctuary" or Temple Mount, the Western Wall and Jewish holy places would remain under Israeli control.

There also will likely have to be an international military presence in Palestine

and long-term aid for the state, which would have to co-operate with Israel against all terrorist activity.

Is such a solution attainable? The answer, it seems to me, is almost surely no. The obstacles are too great. What are they?

First and foremost, Ariel Sharon. With Arafat gone, Sharon no longer has the old excuse for refusing to talk to the Palestinians—that he cannot negotiate with a terrorist. But having crushed the intifada, why should Sharon negotiate now with anyone?

His Sharon Plan—surrender Gaza in return for U.S. support of his security fence, annexation of all major Israeli settlements on the West Bank, and a united Jerusalem as Israel's eternal capital—has already been accepted by George W. Bush in a presidential letter.

Nor could Sharon give up West Bank settlements, even were he disposed to do so. His plan to exit Gaza has already split his coalition and provoked calls for his assassination. Hundreds of rabbis have urged Orthodox soldiers to defy orders to remove settlers from Gaza.

Sharon is prime minister because he campaigned against Barak's policy of trading "land for peace." And if he is going through hell to get Israelis to yield Gaza, does anyone think he could, or would, try to convince Israelis to abandon West Bank settlements he himself implanted and pledged to retain forever?

It does not appear Sharon has any intention of doing so. As Dov Weissglas, his deputy, told the Israeli newspaper

Ha'aretz, the idea of the now-famous Bush letter to Sharon was this:

Get America to sign on to Israel's annexation of wide swatches of the West Bank, to rejection of Palestinians' right of return, to a Greater Jerusalem as Israel's eternal capital, and to a security wall incorporating Palestinian land. Then embalm the "peace process" indefinitely.

Sharon has already been given everything he wants by the president of the United States. Why negotiate with the Palestinians? For what? He has it all.

If the president backs off his letter and demands that Sharon accede to a viable Palestinian state, not divided by settlements or chopped into bantustans by Israeli security roads, what does Bush do when Sharon defies him and says no?

Will he denounce Sharon and risk a firestorm from the Jewish community, Democrats, AIPAC, neocons, the Republican Right, talk radio, and fundamentalist Christians for whom support of Israel is biblical command? Why would Bush get into a bloody losing brawl like that?

As Gen. Brent Scowcroft, national security adviser to Bush I, told the *Financial Times*, "When I first heard Sharon was getting out of Gaza I was having dinner with Condi [Rice] and she said, 'At least that's good news,' ... and I said, 'That's terrible news. ... Sharon will say 'I want to get out of Gaza, finish the wall [Israel's security fence] and say I'm done.'" Exactly.

Sharon will not budge and Bush lacks the will to push him. As General Scowcroft says, "Sharon just has him wrapped around his little finger I think the president is mesmerized."

Let no one get his hopes up about a Mideast peace. As ever, it is a mirage. ■

Conservative Votes, Conservative Victory?

Millions of Christians demand democracy.

By John Zmirak

I HAVE SPENT the past year and a half, along with many of this magazine's writers, in increasingly sharp opposition to the foreign and budgetary policies of the Bush administration. I thought all along that would make any victory by the Republicans a bittersweet one. The war in Iraq has done much to nurture the growth of a thoughtful critical movement among conservatives, one that set itself against the policies of an administration with a moral compass but little prudence. The reasons for all this opposition remain valid. But they're beginning to seem beside the point. The election did not swing on Iraq. As every survey showed, Bush's victory was delivered not by chickenhawks, but Christians. Exit polling revealed that 22 percent of voters cited moral values as the "most important issue." The economy motivated 20 percent, terrorism came third at 19 percent, and Iraq was the top concern of just 15 percent of voters.

Eleven states voted to preserve traditional marriage—not launch 11 more Fallujahs, and that is what really bothers the Left. Atrocities and foreign-policy disasters they can accept, even snigger at. It's their fellow citizens they really cannot stomach.

Reading the post-election press is enough to convince an honest reader that the radical cultural elite in the U.S. is not merely wrongheaded but contemptuous and fiercely intolerant of the ethical concerns of the American majority. Indeed, a single edition of the *New York Times* op-ed page made this abundantly clear.

The often judicious Thomas Friedman proclaimed himself deeply depressed by the election, which he said had been swung by "by people who don't just favor different policies than I do—they favor a whole different kind of America. We don't just disagree on what America should be doing; we disagree on what America is." Not quite true, Mr. Friedman. In fact, we differ on how America should be governed—by majority votes in legislatures or the diktats of unelected, unaccountable judges.

Maureen Dowd poured out her patented petulance on the "devoted flock of evangelicals, or 'values voters,'" who favor "opposing abortion, suffocating stem cell research and supporting a constitutional amendment against gay marriage." Bush won the election "by dividing the country along fault lines of fear, intolerance, ignorance and religious rule."

Just down the page, Garry Wills—a man who has read enough St. Augustine that he ought to know better—bemoaned the apparent ignorance of his countrymen, sniffing that "many more Americans believe in the Virgin Birth than in Darwin's theory of evolution." Wills, author of *Why I Am a Catholic ... Why I Am Also the Queen of Spain*, compared the voting majority of Americans to terrorists, opining, "Where else do we find fundamentalist zeal, a rage at secularity, religious intolerance, fear of and hatred for modernity? Not in France or Britain or Germany or Italy or Spain. We find it in the Muslim world, in Al Qaeda, in Saddam Hussein's Sunni loyalists."

Well, I guess that makes things clear,

doesn't it? These people have really convinced themselves that they live in enemy-occupied territory, surrounded by dangerous fanatics. And what convinced them? The fact that Americans rebelled against the decision of a panel of appointed judges in Massachusetts to rewrite by fiat the very institution of marriage, just as in 1973, when another bunch of lawyers decided to rewrite the definition of human life.

Republican, representative government is the only system America has ever had—and the Left has become disgusted with it. Having used judicial decisions over the past 60 years to impose its preferences upon a disgruntled majority, leftists are now enraged that an effective rebellion has finally been mounted. And they are going to fight it tooth and nail.

Let's be clear: this election was not about gay marriage and abortion—it was about who rules whom. Do Americans rule themselves, within a broad range of constitutional principles, or do judges and lawyers rule us behind a democratic façade? Pay no attention to the judge behind the curtain.

Candidates who declare they support *Roe v. Wade* are saying nothing more than that they will protect voters from themselves—defend people whom they claim are "pro-choice" from the results of ... their own votes. These people really do see Americans as a band of dangerous children who have somehow gotten hold of firearms (figuratively in the form of the vote and literally in form of, well, firearms), who must be coaxed into putting down the pistol and handing it to

the nice judge over there, who will keep it safe.

Here is what I wish George W. Bush had said in his debate with Senator Kerry—and what I hope any judge he appoints will tell his congressional examiners:

“I believe in democracy around the world but especially here in the U.S. I trust the American people. I trust their wisdom over that of nine unelected judges who serve for life. I trust the average voter over the average lawyer. I’m in

court appointees, a slow acceptance of social and moral revolution. There should never again be another David Souter or Anthony Kennedy appointed by a Republican. Better a court with empty seats. Better endless filibusters and attendant hand wringing. Better another Bork nomination—which this time should be followed by the nomination of someone farther to the Right, with the promise that every successive appointee will be still more conservative. Filibuster Bork, we’ll give you another

schools or its voters? If Americans decided by majority vote in various states—or federally—to legalize abortion, gay “marriage,” the cannibalistic cloning of unborn children ... well, that’s one thing. Should that happen, then we would indeed be revealed as an isolated minority, a remnant whose only hope was to serve as a prophetic witness to the truth amidst the general decline. That is the position of Christians in much of Europe. It would be tragic but tolerable. To have these policies foisted upon us by force and fraud—that is something else entirely. It is a cause for rage that we saw, thankfully, take form in the voting this month.

We will soon know how seriously the Bush administration takes the source of its mandate—whether it intends to reward its base or betray it. A band of brave activists is leading the fight to deny the aging pro-abortion activist Arlen Specter the chair of the Judiciary Committee, which he recently boasted he would use to keep off judges who threatened *Roe v. Wade*—that is, who threatened America with democracy. We must make it clear, now that our influence is at its strongest, that we will not accept Specter. Several of the senators who will decide Specter’s fate have quietly told Christian leaders that they are troubled by his extremist, elitist position. Several others on this committee treasure presidential ambitions—I’m thinking of Bill Frist, Chuck Hagel, George Allen, Rick Santorum, and John McCain. They must learn, and learn quickly, that if they betray us now, we will remember in two years when they come to milk us for money, volunteers, and votes. The millions of Christians who turned out for President Bush demand democracy—not dictatorship with a different face. ■

John Zmirak is the author of Wilhelm Röpke: Swiss Localist, Global Economist.

WE WILL SOON KNOW HOW SERIOUSLY THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION TAKES THE SOURCE OF ITS MANDATE—WHETHER IT INTENDS TO REWARD ITS BASE OR BETRAY IT.

favor of letting the people of the 50 states vote on their abortion laws. I trust them to make these laws like all the other laws. My opponents don’t. They claim to believe that Americans want abortion to be legal for any reason at all, up through the ninth month—but they aren’t smart enough to vote that way. These elitists think that the voter is stupid enough to pass laws he doesn’t support. So they intend to protect Americans from themselves by making sure that they never have the chance to vote on this issue—or on so-called gay marriage. These liberal elitists are so afraid of the common man that they’ll twist the Constitution into a pretzel to make sure that the voter can’t make important decisions. I have a different view. I think it’s the view on which this country was founded.”

This election, which even elite media are now forced to admit was about social issues and little else—people having lost most of their faith in our Iraq policy—should serve as a wake-up call among Christian conservatives. We are the wedge, the only real constituency in the Republican Party. We should not allow ourselves to be fobbed off with meaningless concessions, ambiguous

Scalia. Reject him, you’ll get John Ashcroft. Bork him, we’ll propose Alan Keyes. And so on. We’re happy to have empty seats on the court. In the best-case scenario, there might be no one there at all.

We have to be clear: this election was not about homosexuality or tolerance or the secret (putative) desire of red-necks to beat up choreographers. It was about judicial tyranny, about the final rejection of democracy by a self-appointed cultural and legal elite that despises the rest of us, feels a loyalty not to America but to an international social and opinion class, dreams of transforming the U.S. into the image of the EU—minus the fine architecture. Not that they’re even a genuine elite; every law professor will admit that *Roe v. Wade* was a ludicrous decision, a parody of constitutional reasoning like the recent Massachusetts decision on gay “marriage.” Real philosophers take these disputes seriously. But the dilettantes with power don’t have to think very hard—since they hardly ever encounter anyone who disagrees with them.

We should cast the issue clearly: are you for judges making the rules—or citizens? Should America be run by its law

Bush 2, Conservatives 0

The president's re-election is a win for war and welfare.

By Doug Bandow

AFTER NOV. 2, the Republican Party seems to have it all: it maintained possession of the presidency and expanded control of Congress. Ironically, however, President George W. Bush's victory may represent the death of the conservatism. In gaining untrammelled power, the Republican Party and conservative movement have lost their souls.

American conservatism grew out of the classical liberal tradition that birthed the United States. Despite manifold policy differences over the years, Republicans routinely emphasized their commitment to individual liberty and limited constitutional government. They believed Washington to possess only specific enumerated powers. The most important domestic issues were matters for the states. Internationally, America needed to be strong but responsible: war was a tool to protect U.S. security, not remake the world.

Most important was conservative recognition of the limitations of political action. In his book *Conflict of Visions*, economist Thomas Sowell observed that the Right had a "constrained" view of mankind: no amount of social engineering could transcend humanity's inherent imperfections. In contrast, modern liberals held an "unconstrained" view, that is, they believed in the perfectibility of human beings and institutions. Thus, the Left advanced government policies to perfect society.

No surprise, Republican Party operatives and their conservative supporters often placed political expediency before philosophical purity. Nevertheless, most

of them formally stood for individual liberty in the face of expanding government power and were embarrassed when forced to compromise. Occasionally—during Ronald Reagan's presidency, for instance—they actually rolled back one government program or another.

In 2000, candidate George W. Bush seemed to represent this conservative tradition. He offered a clear break from the Clinton presidency, advocating tax cuts, speaking of individual responsibility, and promoting humility in foreign affairs. But his presidency failed on almost every count. Rather than acting as a classical liberal, President Bush delivered the Republican Party into the hands of modern liberalism. Today there is little practical difference between Democrats and Republicans.

Spending by the national government has raced ahead at levels more often associated with the Democratic Party. The Bush administration has pushed to nationalize local issues, expanding federal controls over schools, for instance. Republicans, like Democrats, cite increased spending as evidence of their commitment to education.

In fact, this supposedly conservative president engineered the largest expansion of America's welfare state in decades, a poorly designed but hugely expensive drug benefit under the Medicare program. And Bush's officials shamelessly lied about the program's cost to ram it through a skeptical Congress.

The administration has tried to disguise its expansion of government in virtually every area of American life by

applying the fig leaf of "empowerment." But that is true only for Social Security private accounts, which the president largely ignored when seeking a second term. Otherwise, Bushite empowerment is just another name for nanny-state regulation. Al Gore famously compared government to a grandparent. White House Chief of Staff Andrew Card declared that President Bush "sees America as we think about a 10-year-old child," requiring Washington's benevolent guidance.

Under Bush, the GOP distinguished itself by cutting taxes, but its spending excesses threaten to undo that achievement. Indeed, rather than devoting themselves to making income-tax rate cuts permanent, in October the president and Congress turned the legislative process into a caricature of special-interest policymaking by approving a corporate tax cut larded with benefits for owners of NASCAR tracks and producers of fishing-tackle boxes, among other moneyed interests employing high-priced lobbyists. The rest of us will pay for the GOP's fiscal irresponsibility.

President Bush may be a better representative of "conservative values," but most of those lie beyond the reach of government—and especially Washington. Moreover, he has turned even the best-intentioned measures into political vehicles. He sold his faith-based initiative as a mechanism to allow religious social services to compete with secular organizations for federal grants; he then treated it as a campaign tool with which administration officials lobbied grant recipients for their backing. Using Uncle

Sam's lucre to politicize the mission of religious groups is particularly shocking since the president is apparently sincere in his faith.

In international affairs, President Bush most dramatically diverged from traditional conservative policy. In the 2000 campaign, he criticized the Clinton administration for its misdirected emphasis on nation-building and spoke of greater humility in American policy abroad. He even talked of bringing U.S. forces home from garrison duty in the Balkans, an area of no security interest to America.

Over the last three years, however, George W. Bush has advanced an international agenda breathtaking in its arrogance. Instead of focusing on the necessary campaign against al-Qaeda in Afghanistan and elsewhere, he launched a preventive war based on bad (indeed, consciously distorted) intelligence and offered no apologies for his mistake.

His substitute justification, that of promoting—or really imposing—democracy on a recalcitrant Islamic society was no different from Bill Clinton's excuse for attacking Serbia in 1999. Indeed, the Iraq campaign was as ambitious as any bout of liberal war-making reaching back to Woodrow Wilson. One senior Bush aide told author Ron

“enhanced jihadist recruitment and intensified al-Qaida's motivation.”

Abandoning traditional Republican skepticism of foreign aid, President Bush advanced a program to win Iraqi hearts and minds by providing garbage trucks and creating zip codes. Such utopian social engineering was more appropriate for liberals like John Kerry than a self-professed limited-government conservative. And Bush curtly dismissed fiscally responsible members of Congress who advocated trimming the administration's Iraqi aid program and turning some grants into loans. The president demanded wide “transfer authority” as part of last year's \$87 billion Iraq budget request, allowing him to spend the money without congressional oversight.

Equally disappointing was President Bush's belief in executive prerogative. Administration supporters explicitly—and administration members implicitly—questioned the patriotism of anyone with the temerity to criticize the president's Iraq policy. No less a figure than the vice president suggested that a vote against the GOP ticket risked more terrorist incidents.

President Bush opposed a new cabinet department for homeland security until it became politically convenient,

responsibilities or restrain executive abuses. Many otherwise sober conservative activists denounce anyone who criticizes the president about anything.

Although a decent person, George W. Bush has lived up to the worst anti-intellectual caricature of conservatives, especially religious conservatives. He admits that he doesn't read or “do nuance.” If broadcaster Pat Robertson is correct, the president didn't expect casualties in Iraq. President Bush believes in presidential infallibility and exhibits an irresponsible, juvenile cockiness. (“Bring 'em on,” he said, as more than 1,100 American soldiers have been killed and more than 8,000 have been wounded in Iraq.) He holds no one in his administration accountable, even for lying to Congress and the public.

Alas, his malign influence has infected much of the Republican Party and conservative movement. Rep. John Boehner (R-Ohio) cheerfully writes that after the 1996 election, “It turned out the American people did not want a major reduction of government.” So he and his colleagues were only too happy to forget fighting for principle and give the people what they supposedly wanted: more programs, spending, and federal control. And, only incidentally, the GOP majority would enjoy the perks of control along the way.

Conservative intellectuals also want to make peace with Leviathan. *New York Times* columnist David Brooks has written about “the death of small-government conservatism”: Washington should federalize education reform, subsidize new energy technologies, and promote national service.

Some conservatives even want to embrace the nanny-state. David Frum asks why a federal tax “on calorific sodas would *not* be a good idea?” Forget individual responsibility: “Big Gulp drinks and super-sized fries are making America sick ...” Why not sue

ALTHOUGH A DECENT PERSON, GEORGE W. BUSH HAS LIVED UP TO THE WORST ANTI-INTELLECTUAL CARICATURE OF CONSERVATIVES.

Suskind, “We're an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality.”

This is the sort of hubris highlighted in Greek tragedies—and America is less secure as a result. Iraqi guerrillas who never before gave America a thought are attacking U.S. soldiers. More ominously, reports London's International Institute for Strategic Studies, the Iraq War has

then he demagogued his Democratic opponents. He made no mention of reform in the aftermath of the greatest intelligence failure in decades until the 9/11 Commission made its report, at which point he demanded that Congress act. Proving the truth of Lord Acton's axiom that power corrupts, the GOP majority failed to fulfill its constitutional

the sugar pimps as well? The Right has become the Left in Washington just as the revolutionary pigs became the reactionary humans in George Orwell's *Animal Farm*.

American conservatism once represented a serious philosophy. Although the Republican Party often honored conservative principles only in the breach, there was a real difference between the philosophical camps and political parties. No one would mistake the governing philosophies of Ronald Reagan and Jimmy Carter.

That difference is no longer possible to discern. Some conservative activists say that they plan to fight for their philosophy with the election over. But the re-elected president neither shares their beliefs nor needs their support. Under President George W. Bush, modern conservatism has become a slightly fainter version of modern liberalism. Both groups hold Thomas Sowell's "unconstrained" vision of humanity, that people and their institutions are perfectible through the right application of spending, regulation, and war. Whether seen as children or grandchildren, the slightly befuddled masses need control by their kindly political elders in Washington.

The demise of traditional conservatism would matter little if it had not become the primary political repository of the classical liberal commitment to individual liberty. But President Bush's capture of both the conservative movement and Republican Party has destroyed the most effective opposition to the growth of statism in U.S. society. Embracing George W. Bush has yielded conservatives power, but they have sold their souls—along with the individual liberty that is so integral to the American experience—for a mess of pottage. ■

Doug Bandow is a senior fellow at the Cato Institute and a former special assistant to President Ronald Reagan.

Bush's Brain

The candidates' comparative IQ scores don't conform to the cliché.

By Steve Sailer

FOR A MOMENT, I thought Sen. John F. Kerry was the exception to the rule that all liberals are secretly obsessed—even though they tell each other they don't believe in it—with IQ.

The Thursday before the election, Tom Brokaw interviewed Kerry on the "NBC Nightly News" and told him, "Someone has analyzed the president's military aptitude tests and yours and concluded that he has a higher IQ than you do."

Kerry instantly dismissed this news with admirable nonchalance, "That's great. More power."

I was especially interested in Kerry's response because that "someone" who had estimated Kerry's and Bush's IQs was me.

I had long been struck by how so many liberals were convinced that Bush was an idiot compared to Kerry. For example, Howell Raines, the former executive editor of the *New York Times*, asked: "Does anyone in America doubt that Kerry has a higher IQ than Bush? I'm sure the candidates' SATs and college transcripts would put Kerry far ahead."

Yet the scarlet letters "IQ" had almost never appeared in Raines's *Times*. Ten years ago, *The Bell Curve* proved an enormous bestseller, but the backlash against the book banished IQ from the media. Still, as politically incorrect as cognitive tests have become, colleges and the military have not dropped them. They are simply too useful in sorting large numbers of applicants.

Nor have people stopped talking privately about IQ—especially liberals, who seem to believe, with deepest sincerity, both that IQ is an utterly discredited concept and that liberals are better than conservatives because liberals have much higher IQs.

Democrats constantly sneer at Republicans' IQs. Misspelling "potato" ended Dan Quayle's political career, and Google lists 225,000 web pages—few of them complimentary—that include the words "Bush" and "IQ."

In 2001, some jokers issued a prank press release claiming the (nonexistent) "Lovenstein Institute" had scientifically proven that Bill Clinton has a (Galileo-like) IQ of 182, while George H.W. Bush (who was graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Yale in 2.5 years) had a below average 98 and his son (who has degrees from Yale and Harvard) only a 91. Garry Trudeau fell for this transparent nonsense and shoved it into "Doonesbury."

Similarly, last May hundreds of liberal websites and even the august *Economist* magazine succumbed to another IQ hoax, this one claiming that the average IQ in states that voted for Gore was absurdly higher (for example, 113 in Connecticut) than in states that voted Bush (87 in Utah). Immediately following Bush's victory, this fictitious table spread over the Internet again.

In truth, I don't believe anybody has measured average state IQs since the huge post-Sputnik Project TALENT study in 1960. If you look instead at a

rough proxy such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress achievement tests for public-school eighth graders, you'll find that Gore states beat Bush states by only a tiny amount.

A more direct comparison of the parties' voters can be found in the 2000 exit poll, where Bush voters reported an average educational level negligibly

get whatever he wants out of life. As I wrote in the Oct. 11 *American Conservative* in a review of John Sayles's film "Silver City," in which Chris Cooper portrays a moronic politician with Bush's mannerisms, "In the president's lone losing race, his 1978 run for Congress from West Texas, the victor stressed Bush's two Ivy League degrees. Bush resolved never to allow himself to be

date School in 1966. After three weeks of research, I determined that Kerry had achieved the average score for applicants to OCS.

In comparison, Bush scored somewhat above average on the Air Force Officer Qualifying Test, which was normed against applicants to the Air Force Academy. Those are both good scores—officer applicants are well above the national average. The two men were clearly fairly similar in mental ability when seniors at Yale. Based on my research into the details of these two similar but different tests, if I had to bet, I'd wager Bush would have scored higher if they had both taken the same test back in the Sixties.

When Kerry insouciantly replied to Brokaw as if he didn't care what he scored on a 90-minute exam 38 years ago, as if he believed that all that he had accomplished since then was the proper measure of the man, I was impressed.

But then Kerry broke the spell by quibbling about my research, "I don't know how they've done it, because my record is not public. So I don't know where you're getting that from." Evidently, IQ mattered to Kerry, too.

A few days later, Brokaw went on Don Imus's radio show and revealed just how much it bugged Kerry that I had said Bush probably had a slightly higher IQ. After the cameras had stopped rolling, Kerry had rationalized to Brokaw, "I must have been drinking the night before I took that military aptitude test." ■

Steve Sailer is TAC's film critic. He also writes for VDARE.com and iSteve.com.

KERRY IS FROM MASSACHUSETTS, WHERE INTELLECTUAL PRETENSIONS ARE POPULAR. YET THERE WAS LITTLE HARD EVIDENCE THAT KERRY WAS AS BRILLIANT AS HIS FLATTERERS CLAIMED.

greater than Gore voters. Gore did best among high-school dropouts and those who had undertaken postgraduate studies, with Bush leading among those in between. (Many Democrats with advanced degrees, by the way, are public-school teachers with credentials in the easy field of education.)

In the 2002 midterm elections, voters supporting Republican House candidates were particularly well-educated. The GOP won 58 percent to 40 percent among college graduates and even captured a majority among postgrads for the first time in many years.

In 2004, Bush's majority was more downscale. If you assume that high-school dropouts averaged 10 years of schooling, high-school grads 12 years, those who attended college but didn't graduate 14 years, college grads 16, and postgrads 18, then Kerry voters claimed 14.64 years of education and Bush voters 14.48 years or only about six weeks less schooling.

Democrats' denunciations of the president's IQ bemuse me because Bush strikes me as a lazy but clever and unscrupulous operator who, ever since he quit drinking in 1987, has contrived to

outdumbd again. And the Democrats haven't outsmarted him since."

Back in 1999, Charles Murray, co-author of *The Bell Curve*, and I estimated from Bush's SAT of 1206 (about 1280 under the easier scoring system adopted in 1995) that his IQ fell somewhere around the 95th percentile. The late leftist historian Jim Chapin estimated that Bush's IQ of roughly 125 probably falls in the second quartile of presidents, a little below average, while Al Gore, who scored about 10 points higher, was in the third quartile. You don't have to be a genius to be president.

In contrast to Bush, Kerry is from Massachusetts, where intellectual pretensions are popular. Yet there was little hard evidence that Kerry was as brilliant as his flatterers claimed. Unlike Bush, who attended Harvard Business School, Kerry went to plebian Boston College for law school, and his transcripts and test scores appeared to be locked away.

Then a Navy vet named Sam Sewell pointed out to me that the Kerry campaign had posted online an obscure military report giving the cryptic score Kerry had made on the IQ-like test he took when he applied to Officer Candi-

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TAC asked several writers—most of conservative disposition—how they would advise President Bush to proceed in his second term, if they had his attention. (We wish they did.) Their responses follow.

Get Realist

By James P. Pinkerton

Mr. President:

My best—if perhaps unwelcome—advice is to be realistic about what worked and what didn't work during your first four years. The victory was satisfying, but the temptation to overreach, always present at such moments, won't serve you well in a second term.

Perhaps your biggest success was drawing John Kerry as an opponent. A look at 50 percent-plus "wrong track" numbers suggests that you would have lost against a "normal" lunch-bucket Democrat like Dick Gephardt. It's hard to believe the Democrats ignored four decades of electoral history to run yet another Northern liberal.

You also were fortunate that the Democrats played to your cultural conservatism. Your outreach to evangelicals worked so well because the Left obliged by putting gay marriage on the national agenda. Gavin Newsom, the ultimate San Francisco Democrat, made your day by flamboyantly promoting illegal gay weddings; the Religious Right needed no prompting from us to put 11 anti-gay-marriage referenda on the ballot, thus swelling your vote.

Mr. President, these "successes" don't have much to do with you. And beating a candidate like John Kerry by three points does not give you a seat in the Landslide Hall of Fame.

As to the issues for which you are responsible, well, here I would respectfully suggest the record is not so good, and that a change of course is necessary.

While cutting taxes boosted the GDP and helped Citibank and Microsoft reap big profits in a globalized world, the Next Question for Americans is the fate of the social contract—what remains of it—and how to strengthen it for ordinary Americans in Schumpeterian times. The danger is that Democrats will eventually offer a plan for dealing with middle-class squeeze that doesn't centerpiece a tax increase.

You've been fortunate as well with the War on Terror. Sept. 11 has made you a consequential War President. You clearly relish the role and convey sincerity when you proclaim Operation Iraqi Freedom as part of a grand crusade to reshape the Middle East. Wars on Iraq and Iran are good electoral strat-

egy—they certainly help people forget that you neglected to read that memo of August 2001 entitled, "Bin Laden Determined to Attack Inside the United States." But electoral politics aside, there's not much reason to think these neo-Wilsonian ventures will actually succeed.

Of course, the Democrats may continue to commit electoral suicide—and you will look good by contrast. They could well forget the war issue, forget economic issues, and go back to their Hollywood base, emphasizing their dearly held frou-frou cultural concerns. Let's hope they don't start offering normalcy at home and realism abroad—for that would give you and your party real trouble—even if you are still receiving your orders from, as you put it in New York City, "beyond the stars." ■

James P. Pinkerton is a columnist for Newsday and a fellow at the New America Foundation in Washington, D.C. He served in the White House under Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush.

Court Control

By Phyllis Schlafly

The first order of business for the new Congress should be to restore self-government by curbing the power of the judicial supremacists.

1. The Senate should change its rules to provide that a filibuster can be ended by three-fifths of Senators present (instead of three-fifths of the entire membership). That would give the Republican majority a fair chance to confirm President Bush's nominees to the Supreme Court and other federal courts.

2. Congress should pass a law providing that federal judges have no power to hear a challenge to the Defense of Marriage Act or to change the definition of marriage to something other than one man and one woman or to give unmarried persons the legal benefits of husbands and wives.

3. Congress should pass a law providing that federal judges have no power to ban the Pledge of Allegiance, the Ten Commandments, and other public acknowledgments of God by public officials or on public property.

4. In appointing judges to the federal courts, President Bush should use the litmus test that he announced in the second presidential debate: "I wouldn't pick a judge who said that the Pledge of Allegiance couldn't be said in a school because it had the words 'under God' in it."

5. In considering judicial nominees, the Senate should require appointees to make clear whether they believe in the Constitution as written or whether they believe that the Constitution can evolve into whatever the Supreme Court says it is—a heresy first enunciated by the Warren Court in the 1958 case of *Cooper v. Aaron*. All candidates should be rejected who admit to the latter view.

6. Congress should amend a Watergate-era law, the Civil Rights Attorney's Fees Awards Act, to prevent the ACLU and others from collecting attorney's fees for lawsuits claiming that the public acknowledgment of God is an "establishment of religion" prohibited by the First Amendment.

7. Congress should prohibit the federal courts from ordering any government entity at any level to raise or redistribute taxes under any circumstance.

8. The Senate and House Judiciary Committees should hold weekly hearings on various proposals to reform the judiciary, to review and debate court decisions that declare laws unconstitutional, to limit the jurisdiction of federal judges on matters where we don't trust them, to take away the power of a single federal judge to use an injunction to block enforcement of a referendum during the years that a case winds its way through the court system, to limit consent decrees to one or two years, and to impeach judges who base decisions on foreign law instead of on the U.S. Constitution. ■

Phyllis Schlafly is the author of the new book The Supremacists: The Tyranny of Judges and How to Stop It.

Security Begins at Home

By John Derbyshire

Dear Mr. President:

You have won a splendid victory. As Charles Moore noted in the London *Daily Telegraph*, what happened on Nov. 2 was "the biggest vote ever cast for a conservative in the history of the world." There are, of course, some on our side of the aisle who doubt whether you can properly be called a conservative at all. You have broken a lot of conservative hearts these past four years. From what I know of your character, I doubt the next four years will leave us in a much happier frame of mind. We can hope, though. Here is my personal hope list.

Get out of Iraq. I supported the Iraq War, and I do not regret my support. Sept. 11 showed that the civilized world is in peril from fanatical terrorist groups with access to govern-

ment-scale resources in barbarous nations. It is unlikely we can eliminate terrorism altogether (as you yourself confessed in an unguarded moment during the campaign), but we can deny the terrorists government-scale resources by bringing down or intimidating likely governments and smashing up the resources. Iraq was a good start. I am sure we shall need to do more of this work. "Nation-building" is a liberal fantasy, though. The best we can hope for in Iraq is a despotic government that is not anti-American; or for continuing chaos in which no government can build threatening resources; or for fragmentation into small, impotent statelets. A swift departure soon, accompanied by suitably ferocious rearguard actions and properly brazen refusals to apologize or compensate, would bring about one or other of these results.

Change minds abroad. We have learned this past year and a half, those of us who did not know it already, that the United Nations is an embezzlers' club, the European Union is a discussion and dining group for failed politicians, and rabid anti-Americanism is the normal daily cast of mind for several billion people. This is not good. The civilized world needs to present a more united front to the forces of barbarism. It ought not be beyond the wit and powers of a U.S. administration to devise ways to turn important foreign nations more to our way of thinking without abasing ourselves before their fantasies of superior wisdom or truckling to thieves, fools, and pacifists. There is some promising material you might work with out there. Think of India, Turkey, Russia; think of the Anglosphere.

Face up to the entitlements crunch. It will soon be upon us. You have read all about it. The longer we wait, the more dire the situation will become. You don't have to look to re-election now, so you are better placed to administer painful medicine. Let it not be said, 20 years from now, "This awful fiscal calamity could have been prevented if the second Bush administration had acted."

Enforce the immigration laws, or ask Congress to change them. If it is true (which I do not actually believe) that the U.S. needs several million unskilled workers from abroad, propose immigration laws that acknowledge that fact and execute a policy that administers those laws in a strict and orderly way. If it is not true, instruct your officers to enforce the current laws, especially those that forbid employers to hire illegal immigrants. The greatest outrage in America's public life today is the wilful refusal of our federal executive to enforce the people's laws. Oh, and have the federal courts look at the "jurisdiction" clause in Section 1 of the Fourteenth Amendment. "Obstetric tourism" is a much lesser outrage than the other, but it is still an insult to U.S. citizenship. ■

John Derbyshire is a contributing editor of National Review and the author of Prime Obsession.

A Modest Proposal

By Nicholas von Hoffman

Mr. Andrew Card
Chief of Staff
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Card:

I was thunderstruck to get your letter soliciting my advice for Mr. Bush's second term. Reaching out across the aisle in the approved bipartisan spirit which blossoms for a few weeks after every election is one thing, but I have to warn you that reaching out to cranks and malcontents such as myself will result in little more than your sustaining a torn rotator cuff. However, since you asked ...

1. Let's deal with the biggest problem before we worry about minor topics like illegal immigrants or why our jobs have sprouted wings and flapped off to the Far East. Before all else, immediately put in motion the first phases of Operation Iraqi Skedaddle, to use its code name. Its public relations name should be Operation Perfected Iraqi Democracy. The objective here is to get our troops out of that sandbox alive. Politically, that cannot be done until there has been an election and a spanking new, democratic government is up and running.

Don't make it hard on yourself by actually trying to have an election. People could get killed that way. Announce that an election has been held and read off the names of a bunch of not-so-ex-Ba'athist cutthroats. The fact that no election took place will make no difference. If you say it did, there are 200 million American dumb clucks who will believe you. You doubt that? Don't. There are 200 million dumb clucks who already believe that there is electricity, running water, functioning sewerage systems, public safety, schools, bridges, and hospitals in Iraq. Now that we've got all that stuff up and running, why not an election? It's a Potemkin world, baby. So enjoy.

2. Stop pussyfooting around with the trial lawyers. Get rid of them. They're responsible for extortionate health-insurance premiums, and they also cause cancer, child pornography, divorce, bleeding gums, marriage, cystic fibrosis, mad-cow disease, and seven out of ten toilet stoppages.

3. Tackle the looming Social Security disaster. The baby boomers, who, taken as a group, are among the most spoiled, self-regarding, grasping bunch of people to be seen on a line

for a government handout, are nearing retirement age. As you would expect from this bunch, they are salivating at the thought of getting years of Social Security that we cannot afford to give them and they don't deserve. Politically it is impossible to announce, "We're not paying you freeloaders." But there is another way to chivvy these leeches out of money that younger, harder-working people have to bust their butts making.

Mr. Bush should be urged to take the position that this recurrent flu shot problem should be left to the free market. Government interference will only complicate matters. Since drug manufacturers have backed out of the flu-vaccine business because they cannot get a decent return on their money, we can reasonably expect very small numbers of shots to be made available in future years. Since flu decimates older, non-productive people while leaving younger, stronger persons fit to continue work, we can look forward to a dramatic drop in the number of people applying for Social Security benefits. So, Presto! Bismo! the looming financial crisis disappears and the administration can go on using payroll tax receipts from younger workers for wars and other good stuff.

To forestall Democrats complaining that Mr. Bush lacks compassion, it is recommended that the federal government help older persons suffering with arthritis by inaugurating a

“Before all else, put in motion the first phases of Operation Iraqi Skedaddle.”

free Vioxx program. I understand that Merck has warehouses full of this wonderful analgesic. The Vioxx should be available at quite reasonable terms, and the program should pay for itself thanks to its beneficial side effect of reducing the number of persons on Medicare and Medicaid.

4. Finally, the president has obviously been given a mandate for another tax cut. This one, I believe, should be for the faithful. Don't the people who gave Mr. Bush a second term deserve a little something in return? How about a 5 percent across the board income-tax cut for all persons attending church or synagogue 48 or more weeks a year? Muslims, as members of an organization on the terrorism list, are excluded *a priori*.

If Mr. Bush follows these recommendations, I am sure he will be elected to a third term. ■

Nicholas von Hoffman is a former columnist for the Washington Post and Point-Counterpoint commentator for CBS's 60 Minutes. He is the author of many books including, most recently, Hoax.

Collapsing Case For Free Trade

By Paul Craig Roberts

America enjoys a singular advantage that shields us from our economic problems: the dollar serves as the world's reserve currency and is thus guaranteed a high level of demand. Foreign central banks hold their reserves in dollars, and countries are billed in dollars for their oil imports. The world demand for dollars means that the U.S. can hemorrhage debt for a protracted period on a scale that would promptly wreck any other country's currency.

Currently, the U.S. trade and budget deficits are adding to our indebtedness at an annual rate of \$1 trillion. Most of these dollars go into the hands of foreigners, who are content to add them to their reserves and to convert them into ownership of U.S. assets. The problem arises when foreigners become loaded up with dollars and no end to the dollar flood is in sight.

Three factors have kept the oversupply of dollars from ending the dollar's reserve role: the size of the U.S. economy, America's leadership in world affairs, and the lack of an alternative reserve currency. But the protection offered by these three factors is declining. The formation of the European Union is creating an internal market larger than the U.S. market and a new currency, the euro, that has strongly appreciated against the dollar during the past two years. Japan's economy is high-tech and large. Developments in China and India have both countries on track to becoming the world's largest economies. The policies of the Bush administration have undermined America's world leadership and isolated the U.S. One result could be that oil producers abandon the dollar as the means of payment.

The U.S. is ceasing to be a manufacturing economy. In the early '80s, our trade deficit was due to oil imports. Today, the trade deficit in manufactured goods—including advanced technology products—is three and a half times the oil-import bill.

Offshore production and job outsourcing are prime contributors to the burgeoning trade deficit. When American firms produce and hire abroad to serve U.S. markets, domestic goods and services are turned into imports. The use of foreign locations and labor has resulted in the loss of 3 million high-productivity, high-paying jobs over the last four years. Forcing U.S. workers into domestic service jobs means lower incomes that result in slower growth in the consumer market and a declining share of world income.

As long as the rest of the world is willing to accept the outpouring of dollars, the U.S. can ignore these problems. But the day the world decides that its hoard of dollars represents claims that the U.S. cannot meet, dollar dumping begins. When it does, financing for trade and budget deficits dries up. Interest rates rise sharply. Cheap foreign goods become unaffordable. Living standards plummet.

The Bush administration should begin by asking how America benefits from the transfer of U.S. capital, technology, and know-how to foreign competitors. The "gains from trade" argument defines trade gains as the result of each country specializing in those economic activities in which it has comparative advantage. But comparative advantage cannot operate when a country moves its productive factors to another country. Offshore production and job outsourcing benefit the recipient countries and turn what was formerly domestic production into imports. Americans lose their incomes while the trade deficit and pressure on the dollar's value increase. Clearly, there are no net gains to Americans from this transaction.

“The Bush administration must immediately confront and prepare contingency plans for what happens when the dollar loses, through overproduction, its role as the world's reserve currency.”

The Bush administration must confront this problem and cease its obedience to multinational corporations, which improve their profitability and CEO bonuses by substituting foreign labor. The U.S. is not losing competitively to foreign producers. U.S. firms are lowering their costs of production by abandoning American labor and moving abroad. This new phenomenon is not covered by the case for free trade.

Free-trade economists are incapable of recognizing the problem. It is their view that freedom of economic action is the ultimate value and that every U.S. firm has the right to abandon America if it is in the firm's interest. One can make an argument for this, but it is not the argument upon which the case for free trade rests.

The Bush administration must immediately confront and prepare contingency plans for what happens when the dollar loses, through overproduction, its role as the world's reserve currency. Should U.S. puppets in oil-producing countries be swept aside by rising anti-Americanism in response to our invasion of the Middle East, new Islamic states can destroy the American superpower simply by requiring that countries pay their oil bills in euros.

The central economic problem faced by the U.S. is that the movement offshore of the production of goods and services that are sold in U.S. markets makes it impossible to bring balance to the trade deficit that threatens the dollar's role as reserve currency. The continued movement offshore of American jobs guarantees the collapse of the dollar and the U.S. economy. ■

Paul Craig Roberts was Assistant Secretary of the Treasury under President Reagan and is the author of The Tyranny of Good Intentions.

Govern Best, Govern Least

By Robert A. George

Dear Mr. President:

Congratulations on your impressive victory. Below are a few suggestions that might assist you as you strive to govern on a stated belief in the basic concept of limited, accountable government.

1. A Color-Blind Society—Get rid of the color-coded terror alerts. On a practical level, no one knows what the colors mean, and the average citizen doesn't know what to do when the level is raised. Worse, the new normal in America is the elevated/yellow level. Yes, yellow is the signal for caution. But more people associate yellow with cowardice. This is not a nation of cowards. If necessary, switch to a numerical alert system. Def Con 3, anyone?

2. Extreme Makeover: Cabinet Edition—Many people who should be your strongest supporters are dismayed at your inability to hold accountable those charged with executing your policies. Your Secretary of Defense made profound errors in planning for postwar Iraq. Those errors—largely because of the lack of troops—place American soldiers and Marines in continued danger. Other fallout from those errors includes the Abu Ghraib scandal that has caused what will be a decades-long public relations nightmare for the U.S. If you don't wish to dismiss the good secretary for cause, at least allow him to depart with "the thanks of a grateful nation." His replacement should be a new face, someone not tainted by the missteps of the current DOD structure.

Oh, retaining a Treasury Secretary who tells voters that job-loss is a "myth" may not be a great idea either. Just a thought.

3. Tax Not, Spend Not—If tax-and-spend is wrong because of what is taken from the productive segments of society and given to the unproductive, then tax-cut-and-spend is wrong

because of what is taken from future generations and given out to the current one. Obviously, in a wartime economy, spending on defense and homeland security is a necessity. But if "everything changed on 9/11," then it is perfectly acceptable to say to members of Congress that that includes spending. Yes, the Congress proposes spending bills, but the president has the ability just to say, "No." The drunken-sailor spending days must come to an end.

4. Bomb Iran?—Probably not the best idea. A nuclear Iran is something no one wants. But the younger generation of Iranians are those most likely to be friendly to the West. Bombing their country to eliminate possible nuclear laboratories is not a way to engender good sentiments.

5. The Gift That Keeps on Giving—That Medicare legislation must have seemed good at the time, but news that the true costs were hidden disappointed many of your conservative supporters. Not only is it expensive, but you may have set a trap for Republicans in the 2006 elections. Perhaps you have heard of the "donut" problem? Between the \$2,250 and \$5,100 levels of coverage, there is a hole that will force seniors to pay for drugs out of their own pockets. Some might say that that is only fair. But given that seniors are likely to hit that coverage hole in the summer and fall of '06, who are they likely to

"Congress proposes spending bills, but the president has the ability just to say, "No." The drunken-sailor spending days must come to an end."

blame right around the time they are getting around to voting? Consider defusing this electoral time bomb. Otherwise, your last two years in office could be somewhat unpleasant.

6. Folsom (& Other) Prison Blues—Finally, consider forming a bipartisan commission to look at the problems of the prison population—everything from prison rape (an issue that several in the conservative media, including *The American Conservative*, have raised) to readjustment into law-abiding society. This would be an aspect of compassionate conservatism because it would address the problems of incarceration compassionately, while recognizing the struggles of the families of the incarcerated. That's family values.

All the best in your second term. ■

Robert A. George is a New York Post editorial writer.

Death of a Programmer

Outsourcing deflates the information-technology boom.

By W. James Antle III

THE OFFICE WAS practically empty, except for some boxes and the desk where a pile of computing handbooks—on topics ranging from HTML to Windows 2000—sat gathering dust. The former occupant had walked away from his \$75,000 a year technical support engineer position to attend culinary arts school, telling his former colleagues he had always wanted to try his hand as a chef.

It's not an unusual scene. At the height of the 1990s boom, the information technology (IT) field attracted a wide variety of professionals, from midlife career-changers to twentysomethings right out of college. From software developers to system administrators, they were drawn to the high pay, comfortable benefits, and most of all to the prospect of working with the technical skills many of them had carefully cultivated for years.

Industry insiders now perceive something that, if not quite yet a mass exodus, is at least a substantial outflow of seasoned veterans from IT. The dramatic change is evident in Silicon Valley, the hub of the tech boom: a study by the Sphere Institute found that half the Californians working in IT in 2000 have left the field. Nearly one-fourth of them work in non-technology jobs that in many cases pay less. Some were laid off when the boom receded; others took the initiative and fled on their own. Departing IT workers often cite long hours, stress, the need to update their skills constantly, management that does not understand or appreciate their contribu-

tions—and, increasingly, the threat to their long-term career prospects posed by non-immigrant visa programs and offshoring.

Outsourcing began with the low-end jobs. Call centers were shifted first to cheaper labor markets in the South and the Midwest and then abroad to India and Bangladesh. But the trend has gone far beyond help-desk positions. Experienced computer programmers are now among the hardest hit. Norman Matloff, a professor of computer science at the University of California at Davis, who has written extensively on offshoring, has estimated that 17 percent of programmers over age 50 are unemployed.

Government statistics do not always capture the full impact of job losses on computer professionals. When a displaced or disgruntled worker gets a job in new field, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) does not count him as unemployed even if fewer people are working in IT. This summer, the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers-USA (IEEE-USA) released a study looking directly at the number of U.S. workers employed in four leading IT occupations.

IEEE-USA found that the number of employed software engineers in the U.S. plummeted from 856,000 in the first quarter of 2004 to 725,000 in the second quarter, below the annual average for 2003. Employed programmers dropped from 591,000 to 563,000 between the two quarters even as their putative unemployment rate declined. The number of employed computer hard-

ware engineers fell from 86,000 to 83,000 over the same period, while the number of computer scientists and system analysts tumbled from 672,000 to 621,000. A University of Illinois study found that the domestic IT job market shrank 20 percent between March 2001 and April 2004, with half the job losses occurring after the recession was officially over.

"Lose your job, become a janitor and hey, at least you're still employed," is how one former data-center manager sarcastically summarized the disconnect between the official unemployment rates and the actual IT employment data.

The falling employment numbers have been accompanied by sagging morale. Where IT was once, in the words of one unemployed programmer, seen as the "ultimate opportunity within the ultimate meritocracy," wherever techs now gather a sense of foreboding about their jobs and futures pervades. Websites with message boards swapping outsourcing-related stories and news items, like yourjobisgoingtoindia.com, are proliferating. When asked where he saw himself in ten years, a highly paid network security consultant grimly replied, "I might as well be a cafeteria worker on the *Titanic*." Attendees at an IT employees' training workshop in Boston were asked to sum up the future of their field in two words. The first person to raise his hand answered, "Road kill." This sentiment was echoed by many present, who evinced a sort of gallows humor about the survival of

their careers reminiscent of the cult film classic "Office Space."

Scott Kirwin was a computer programmer for a large investment bank. He weathered several rounds of layoffs during the tech-sector downturn before finally meeting the fate increasingly familiar to workers in his field. Kirwin was asked to train workers from India who would replace him in a year. "Their term for it was 'knowledge transfer,'" he recalls. Once he was finally out of his job, he sent out 225 resumes before getting a temporary position at a smaller company without benefits and 20 percent less money.

"IT really did used to be a meritocracy," Kirwin agrees. "I've worked with smart-mouthed kids and people with advanced degrees and decades of experience, and they all were able to rise and fall based on their own abilities."

The experience of being a casualty of offshoring pressed Kirwin into political advocacy. He founded the Information Technology Professionals Association of America (ITPAA), an organization committed to rallying his colleagues and the general public against visa programs like the L-1 and H-1B that threaten technicians' jobs. No radical, Kirwin describes himself as a "free-marketeer." "No one was fighting for my viewpoint," he says. "I believe it's possible to be pro-business and pro-American."

Pointing to the visas that force American IT professionals into direct competition with foreign laborers paid at one-sixth their wage rate, Kirwin asks, "Since when was it the federal government's job to be gaming the labor market at Americans' expense?"

The L-1, for example, allows companies to bring workers from offices overseas and essentially pay them at their home rate. The purpose of bringing them to the United States is to facilitate specialized knowledge transfers as well as integrate the foreign workers into the

broader corporate culture. Instead, many technicians argue that their employers use the program to replace them with cheaper workers.

"Why pay \$60 an hour so someone can support a family," asks one longtime programmer, "if you can get away with paying \$10 or \$20?" Kirwin estimates that H-1Bs and L-1 visas are involved in 45 percent of the cases where IT work is shipped overseas. An unemployed UNIX administrator put it more tartly: "The workers from overseas come here before our jobs go over there."

Kirwin is not the only technician to respond to the offshoring trend with activism and educational efforts. During 13 years in IT, John Pardon went from being a tech writer to a database administrator. Having already seen manufacturing jobs leave his hometown of Dayton, Ohio, Pardon was in a position to watch the same fate befall the high-tech sector. He skillfully managed to evade pink slips while his coworkers'

and policy prescriptions would best stem the flow of IT jobs overseas. The AFL-CIO and Communications Workers of America are supporting a project called Techs Unite, which advocates the unionization of IT workers and collective bargaining. Kirwin says he is not opposed to this in principle, but "ITPAA is based on the professional society, American Medical Association model." On public policy, ITPAA prioritizes a moratorium on L-1 and H-1B visas. But Kirwin emphasizes that the approaches workers take in defending their jobs must depend on the circumstances.

These political efforts may be beginning to bear fruit. In the waning days of the presidential campaign, John Kerry issued a comprehensive plan to confront the offshoring of high-paying jobs. Previously, Kerry's pronouncements against "Benedict Arnold CEOs" had been limited to eliminating a tax break for overseas job creation. (Asked what practical effect this would have on offshoring, one

OFFSHORING PLAYED A ROLE IN PETE COORS'S NARROW DEFEAT IN COLORADO.

jobs slipped away. Finally, he got fed up with what was happening to his profession and resigned on his own accord from the company at which he had worked for a decade.

Pardon is now a policy analyst for Rescue American Jobs. Equipped with a background in political science and history, he has dedicated himself to making the case against the offshoring practices and federal guest-worker programs that endanger American IT jobs.

Like Kirwin, he describes himself as politically conservative. "There is no contradiction between being pro-business yet wanting to keep companies American," Pardon says. "There is nothing conservative about lacking a sense of country."

Anti-outsourcing advocates are not always in agreement as to what methods

activist responded, "almost zero.") But the late October Kerry program promised to impose aggressive new caps on H-1B and L-1 visas and prevailing-wage requirements for H-1B workers.

Offshoring also played a role in Republican Pete Coors's narrow defeat in Colorado's U.S. Senate race. Anti-outsourcing activists circulated reports showing the number of H-1B visa holders Coors had employed and the lack of American workers in the Coors Brewing Company's IT department. Responding to the Republican candidate's claims to be a job-creator, Richard Armstrong of Hire American Citizens told the *Rocky Mountain News*, "Pete creates jobs, just not for American workers." Television commercials denounced Coors for sending jobs abroad.

Pardon describes offshoring as less an issue of free enterprise than “elites who benefit unjustly from a system weighted to enrich the wealthiest and most politically well-connected.” He says Democrats and Republicans should be put on notice that if they don’t confront the issue, activists are not afraid to “name names.”

Yet there are those who contend that job losses due to offshoring are often overstated. “The media has been terrible on this issue,” says Tad DeHaven, an economic policy analyst at the National Taxpayers Union. He suggests it is more accurate to view the practice as “services importation.” DeHaven authored a study pointing to the American economic benefits that result from outsourcing. “Anti-offshoring advocates often cite gross job loss figures and ignore net job gains from services importation.” He refers to another report that projected offshoring would ultimately contribute to 317,000 new IT jobs in the U.S. by 2008.

Those laboring in the field are more skeptical. “Where are these new jobs?” they ask when confronted with this data. This is not a new debate within the IT profession. Proponents of offshoring have always argued that as administrative and pure programming jobs migrate overseas, higher-level architecture, marketing, and customer-service positions would replace them. Yet as even some of those jobs are exported, questions arise about whether this claim is empirically accurate. Others point out that the lower-end jobs are necessary preparation for higher-end positions.

Where does this leave those seeking an IT career? Opponents of offshoring are divided on the question. “Brush up on your burger-flipping skills,” advises one activist. Kirwin, however, continues to do IT work and is more hopeful. “It’s what I love to do,” he says. “I can’t imagine doing anything else.” ■

Weaker Than We Think

Al-Qaeda may have already fired its best shot.

by Russell Seitz

ON OCT. 18, President Bush asked if today we are still living in the ’90s, “in the mirage of safety that was actually a time of gathering threats.”

The *Weekly Standard* takes this to mean “a need to fundamentally change the political culture of the Middle East” lest, as Bush declared, “anger and resentment grow for more decades ... feeding more terrorism until radicals without conscience gain the weapons to kill without limit.”

This is Cold War rhetoric warmed over. No longer do we face an Evil Empire bristling with ICBMs behind its Iron Curtain but a region without strategic weapons and already twice invaded. Salafist fanaticism is a worthy successor to Marxist zeal when it comes to malevolence, but policy must consider the capacity for action, not intent alone. To judge by action, terrorism indeed took advantage of our at best sporadic vigilance and summoned its resources in the ’90s much as the president’s speech observed. But how does its actual capacity for evil-doing compare with the sum of our fears?

In a War on Terror, knowing the enemy’s numbers is vital. London’s International Institute for Strategic Studies reckons Osama bin Laden has recruited 18,000 since 9/11, while some DOD officials think he’s down to his last 3,000 men. Others say that numbers do not matter: it took only 25 to fill the Trojan Horse, and a few thousand National Socialists and Bolsheviks gave lie to Lenin’s dictated identity of quantity and quality.

Today, we have seen the enemy and he has, at most, one division under arms, making it hard to believe a replay of the Thirty Years War is in the offing. Many horrors of the 20th century stemmed from the metastasis of small cadres, but the exponential growth of totalitarian movements remains an historical rarity. Few last long enough to outgrow their infamy. At the margin, 9/11 could join the Trojan Horse and Pearl Harbor among stratagems so uniquely surprising that their very success precludes their repetition.

It takes singular ingenuity to achieve stunning surprise. The ruse that broke a ten-year stalemate and burned the topless towers of Ilium came from Odysseus’ cunning mind, not Agamemnon’s planning staff. After the failed 1993 attack on the World Trade Center, Mohammad Atta applied himself to calculating the energy ten tons of blazing jet fuel could deliver to the towers’ hearts. He chose the moment of his death as wisely as his target and his impact velocity, for the dead man Osama bin Laden now styles “Commander-General” made us forget what he was not: a weapons expert. His inspired effort at grand theft aero transcended the failure of al-Qaeda to acquire the weapons of mass destruction that have obsessed us ever since. The fear one morning engendered dominates our political culture.

However tall bin Laden may loom as a scourge of civilizations, it is increasingly clear that his arsenal is as phony as his army is small—its shelves are bare of

expertise and materiel alike. But the War on Terror is anything but phony, and al-Qaeda is under withering attack by every means a hyperpower and its allies can devise. The cancer remains, but intrusive therapy is clearly taking its toll. As the attrition continues, the focus on what remains is intensifying. This concentration of fire to accelerate the enemy's demise coincides with the contraction of the safe haven available to him to hide. A feedback loop has arisen from the intelligence that flexibility has gained. It is becoming a noose around Osama's neck, and he has only himself to blame for the crumbling platform on which he stands.

Al-Qaeda means "foundation" in the sense of a base of operations rather than a Brookings Institution. In 2001, its host, Afghanistan's Taliban, was on a war footing with the Northern Alliance, an American ally against the Soviet occupation. With the Twin Towers still standing, bin Laden ordered the assassination of the Alliance's leader, Ahmad Shah Massoud. The blood feud this ignited bought al-Qaeda's leadership breathing space, but eventually forced it to flee not just into the Pashtun no-man's-land along the Pakistani border but beyond it, into Pakistan's Northern Areas. It is a region whose lower passes are higher than the Rockies and whose winters make Tora Bora look like Palm Springs—a fine place to hide, but a ludicrous launch pad for a global revolution. On the lam and preoccupied with security and survival, not strategy, al-Qaeda is no longer a magnet for the best and brightest young jihadis. The average al-Qaeda grunt is no Atta, but a high-school dropout who lives at home.

However much the world changed on 9/11, the thousand days before and after it remain identical in one respect—Islamic terrorists killed no one on American soil. Whatever our future fears, in the here and now, al-Qaeda remains

boxed. They can spike truck bombs with as much concentrated radwaste as they can steal or buy, but a frontier of plausibility still separates analytical pessimism from the hinterland of paranoia. Those who imprudently equate the modern ubiquity of high technology with terrorists becoming omniscient or infallible risk a rendezvous with cognitive dissonance.

Practitioners of urban terrorism, like those of strategic bombing on both sides in World War II, may find the psychological as well as the physical damage done disappointing. London's civil society endured the Blitz, and cities of millions coexist with violent death today as well. On 9/11, 1 in 3,000 New Yorkers perished, but in the same year, over 1 in 1,000 urbanites were murdered in three major cities in the Western hemisphere alone.

THE RATIO OF RANTING TO ROCKET SCIENCE AMONG TODAY'S JIHADIS DOES NOT POINT TO ANY REPLAY OF THE MANHATTAN PROJECT.

Sept. 11 reigns supreme among media events, but that bespeaks the semiotic power of television, not the strategic impact of hijacked planes. What happened in New York and Washington pales in comparison to the bombing of London, Dresden, or Tokyo, all orders of magnitude more lethal but equally ineffectual in altering the outcome of the Second World War. Instead of roaring back to reinfest Germany's body politic, the Nazi diaspora died out in the wilderness of Bolivia and Brazil. The Khmer Rouge escaped hanging and remains objectively as capable of entering the WMD sweepstakes as al-Qaeda. But their will is gone. The remnants of their genocidal cadres sit in forest clearings under the brow of the Dalgrek Escarpment, like troops of sullen baboons awaiting a peanut handout.

Information about weapons of mass destruction is ubiquitous in the post-modern world, but functional expertise remains rare. Bioterror is easy on paper, but the learning curve is lethally steep in practice. Likewise, the infrastructure of nuclear escalation remains difficult for nations—let alone cults of no fixed address—to acquire and operate. Especially when everyone expects them to try.

Past assessments of nuclear ambition that assume fixed R&D facilities lead to a more acute view of proliferation risks than the case of a perpetrator on the run. The standard objection is that even if al-Qaeda fails to get an atomic bomb, the fallout from one radwaste-spiked fertilizer bomb would be catastrophic. The answer is guarded: it is not easy to convert the fears of the nuclear freeze movement into reality. Building a bomb

in the absence of sanctions entails a cadre of hundreds of PhDs directing a small army. Bin Laden's skilled technocrats are manacled by sanctions and mercifully few. The ratio of ranting to rocket science among today's jihadis does not point to any replay of the Manhattan Project. The fact is that Salafist Islam's categorical rejection of science not only creates intellectual arthritis but also makes it impossible to integrate technology into the curriculum of a *madrassa* that would look askance at notions of the earth revolving around the sun.

The largest al-Qaeda explosives cache thus far found (in Jordan in 1999) equaled 16 tons of TNT. That's some truck bomb but three orders of magnitude short of what struck but failed to kill the still living city of Hiroshima,

where a thriving financial district abuts the well touristed memorial.

In the recent debates, President Bush asserted that al-Qaeda had lost 75 percent of its top people, but Vice President Cheney reminded us that the remainder “is bent on our destruction.” Now, 18,000 is a formidable force of homicidal fanatics to unleash on any nation, but we are not alone. Al-Qaeda has enemies by the score, and its local concerns are a drain on its capacity for global action. What fraction of his resources can bin Laden sustainably devote to force projection on the far side of the world?

Three decades ago, al-Qaeda was a sort of multinational PLO, an IRA with a worldview refracted through the dark glass of Salafist Islam rather than Marxism. What do we do if it reverts to type? The question may not be academic. The

sades would have gone down in history as a 20-platoon fiasco.

All faiths have their crosses to bear, and one bloody-minded zealot per 100,000 is, alas, the norm. Buddhism shudders at Aum Shinrikyo’s adoption of nerve gas as a Tantric sacramental, just as Christianity does at the Ku Klux Klan and the Reverend Jim Jones. It did not take a Thirty Years War to put them out of business.

Islamic militants may drool over weapons-show catalogs and dream of acquiring what they see in them, but they are looking through a window into the rapidly receding past. The technology-fed arsenals that provided harness for the WWII that was never fought between the superpowers have moved on. The most modern weapons Saddam’s billions could buy ended up turning Iraq’s late

Armageddon—or the Superbowl, for that matter. The sum of all thugs falls 3,000 short of the number of airliners available, and newly minted airport guards outnumber al-Qaeda’s minions 2.5 to 1.

What about weapons of mass destruction? To those who have agonized about them for decades, an epidemic seems as improbable as a few cases of devastation seem inevitable. Despite the continuity of motive and opportunity, just a handful of targets have drawn fire, and only the Lebanon Marine barracks truck bombing, the *Cole*, and the attack on the Pentagon have been militarily significant

Stealing hydrogen bombs, like breaking into Fort Knox, is hard work; the score is still zero despite half a century of trying. So attention turns to the relatively portable and unguarded. Al-Qaeda is always looking for a ship full of hazardous cargo to hijack, simply because one small ship out-carries a fleet of 747s. A kiloton of the least explosive cargo imaginable still dwarfs the destructive potential of airliners in collision. But merchant ship piracy is as much a fact of life now as in the days of letters of marque and reprisal, and the ongoing megaton trade in explosive ammonium nitrate makes ship detonations, as at Port Texas, inevitable disasters of peace like the Kobe earthquake but not the end of the world. Terror is to a degree self-limiting because risks rise as weapons increase in complexity and size. As societal vigilance grows, that risk is multiplied until failure becomes the norm.

Being hunted across the world may have improved the tenor of al-Qaeda. If the 18,000 postulated recruits are all as smart, organized, lucky, and effective as Atta & Co., each might claim 146 victims. But that would leave all of them dead and 99 out of 100 Americans alive and very angry.

The difference WMD would make in al-Qaeda’s hands is not between societal survival or extinction, but America facing

IF OSAMA WERE THE CULTURE HERO HE ASPIRES TO BE, HE WOULD HAVE A HORDE ON HORSEBACK BEHIND HIM THAT WOULD PUT SALADIN TO SHAME.

world is far from cured of the paroxysmal metastasis of bin Laden’s cult, but this malignant growth on the body of Islam has shrunk in response to intervention both surgical and strategic.

But what of the claim that he is a power to be reckoned with within the world of Islam? Volumes have been written about Wahhabi evangelism and Osama’s charismatic power, yet scarcely one Muslim in 100,000 has actually signed up for his *jihad*—good news, considering that we have over 1.3 billion Muslim contemporaries. If Osama were the culture hero he aspires to be, he would have a horde on horseback behind him that would put Saladin to shame. Instead, no more Islamists answered his call to arms than Marxists did Che Guevara’s. If the Church Militant had found so little European zeal at the turn of the 12th century, the cru-

Republican Guard into multispectral eye candy for artillery spotters when America’s JSTARS crews materialized like time travelers with equipment from the next millennium. What justifies the breathtaking cost of America’s high-tech military procurement is that it buys a lease on the future, where we so own the battlefield that no one wants to face us in pitched battle on it.

Yet there is more to conflict than hardware. Even in the WMD era, a Clash of Civilizations requires the dispersion of compelling beliefs more than the concentration of mere zeal. For faith to manifest itself in the redirection of history often requires a vacuum into which ideas can expand into consequences. Unless, as seems unlikely, Islam implodes before our eyes into a perfervid militancy unseen since the 7th century, al-Qaeda may remain unable fill its half of the Plain of

the lethal norm Europe and Japan experienced in World War II—a war with terror that has not yet begun because the enemy lacks the means to fight it. Unlike the Axis, the amply evil bin Laden doesn't have an army—or an aircraft carrier. Pearl Harbor was never in danger of becoming a collective noun. The indifference that led to Dec. 7, 1941 gave rise to its antithesis—vigilance as a policy so universally evangelized that it took a generation to relax into the torpor that made Sept. 11, 2001 possible. Osama bin Laden at large sustains our attention in ways that preclude 9/11's repetition.

This brings us to something hard to face: some things end at their beginning, and al-Qaeda's best shot may have been exactly that. Something perhaps a hundred times worse still hangs over us, but not the Damoclean existential threat the real zealots want. When civilizations clash for ages, their roughest edges dull first, and the risk of their mutual destruction grows less assured. Once the rhetoric of extinction threatened to cow us into abandoning all thought of confrontation with an Evil Empire. Now it serves to inflate into satanic stature a merely evil man.

Late this winter comes the day the War on Terror will have lasted longer than WWII. It will be a time to ask if, in the frozen moment, one side may still be too bruised to consider victory and the other too proud to contemplate defeat. Osama once called America a "weak horse," but as al-Qaeda's forces wane, the shadow this pale rider casts upon the earth is looking ever less caliphal and more quixotic. ■

Russell Seitz, formerly of Harvard's Center For International Affairs and a Los Alamos consultant, has written extensively on WMD and proliferation, visited the Northern Areas of Pakistan, and testified to Congress on the Comprehensive Antiterrorism Act of 1995.

Coercive Compassion

Entitlements rely on force.

By James L. Payne

FISCAL POLICY, normally a reassuringly dull subject, has started to get downright scary. To read some of the latest books about the billions leaving the federal treasury, the subject is up there with hurricane watching for drama.

The eye of the storm centers on this question: what will happen when the baby boomers retire, starting around 2010? Most know the basic dimensions of the problem. Our population is aging. More and more seniors are looking to receive Social Security and Medicare benefits, and fewer and fewer workers are paying taxes to support these programs. How is this gap to be closed? Cut benefits and seniors will scream and suffer. Raise taxes and workers will scream and suffer—and the economy may tank in the process. Do nothing, and there's going to be a huge budget deficit that will certainly tank the economy.

One popular work published this year captures the metaphor of threatening weather in its title. In *The Coming Generational Storm*, Laurence J. Kotlikoff and Scott Burns lay out the danger in blunt terms. They claim that the nation's future financial obligations for Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid put our debt at a mind-boggling \$51 trillion. This means "our kids will be faced with taxes ... that are nearly twice what we currently pay. We are heading into one God-awful fiscal storm, the full dimensions of which are hard to fathom."

We've heard doomsaying before, of course, but yesteryear it came from cranks marketing gold coins. Now the alarmist language is coming from mainstream authors: Kotlikoff is chairman of

Boston University's Economics Department and a former senior economist of the President's Council of Economic Advisors, and Scott Burns is a financial columnist for the *Dallas Morning News*.

Another doomsayer is Peter G. Peterson, former Secretary of Commerce and former chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. His latest book on the looming fiscal crisis is *Running on Empty*. He projects that we will need payroll taxes of 56.7 percent to pay for future Social Security and Medicare benefits. Our current fiscal course, he says, "is catastrophically unsustainable." Even the U.S. Office of Management and Budget has joined the chorus of Cassandra. "The Social Security and Medicare shortfalls compel change," it declared in the 2004 budget. "The longer the delay in enacting reforms, the greater the danger."

The fiscal danger is compounded by the delicate state of the American economy. Until now, foreigners have been stepping in to buy our stocks, bonds, and government debt, confident that the U.S. economy is sound and that the dollar will hold its value. If a mounting deficit causes them to lose confidence, our economic house of cards will collapse. We shall experience a crashing stock market, soaring interest rates, declining tax receipts, ever larger deficits, and hair-raising inflation that takes the economy back, if not to the stone age, at least to Argentina.

Who's to blame? The doomsayers point to politicians, who, they say, are shallow, demagogic, and mendacious. "Our politicians," say Kotlikoff and Burns, "care

more about their next fix—the next election—than they do about the next generation.” Peterson is incensed at the dishonesty practiced in Washington. “If Congress had to abide by its own rules, it would have to throw itself in jail for fraudulent accounting.”

In his book *The Looting of Social Security*, economist Allen W. Smith says, “The government has been cheating on numbers for short-term political advantage since the mid 1980s.” Accountant Joseph Fried identifies several dozen cover-ups and frauds in *How Social Security Picks Your Pocket*. There’s even a novella, *Saving Social Security* by Joseph L. Gruber, that features a corrupt, cocaine-sniffing presidential candidate who gets elected by going from nursing home to nursing home promising to save Social Security.

Politicians may well be demagogic and evasive, but their shortcomings do not adequately account for the threatening fiscal storm. In making their promises and doling out benefits, politicians are only trading on the popular conception of government as provider. We’ve lived so long

Most disregard this realistic, hard-boiled view of government. They want to see government as an inexhaustibly rich father who can fill all needs and provide for all wants. The proof is in the way they employ the word “government.” Their statements about what government can and should do make sense only if one accepts the God-provider conception of government. Substitute the realistic definition, and their pronouncements become crass and silly.

Take this statement by the *Washington Post*’s Harold Meyerson: “At a time when private employers everywhere are cutting back on health insurance and shunning defined-benefit pensions, government can move in to fill the gap.” Then substitute the realistic definition of government: “At a time when private employers everywhere are cutting back on health insurance and shunning defined-benefit pensions, an agency that takes money by force from some people and gives it to others, or back to the same people, can move in to fill the gap.” Now the statement is morally questionable and logically ridiculous.

the language of charity in connection with government benefits. Politicians who approve programs are said to be compassionate. Those who favor increasing benefits are said to be generous while those opposed are seen as stingy. All this is nonsense. A government-benefit system is like a seesaw; one end goes up because the other goes down. The politician who increases benefits in an entitlement program is at the same time draining funds from other people—or even from the same people. Why, then, is he called compassionate, while the politician who disapproves of the transfer is said to be hard-hearted? The answer is that the public views government as Daddy Warbucks.

Sophisticated commentators rise above this view but not all the way. Most still ignore the coercive character of government transfers. Economist Arthur Benavie defends Social Security in warm and cuddly terms. “Society is a family responsible for its members,” he writes. “Risks are shared. The cost of caring for the elderly and the disabled is spread over the entire society.” The analogy fails, of course. In a real family, help is given voluntarily, motivated by love and respect. If there’s a parallel between Social Security and a family, you have to ask what kind of family it is where dad gets his children to support him by carrying a shotgun.

The answer is a dysfunctional and resentful family. In case you haven’t noticed, there’s a lot of anger in the country about entitlement programs. Carolyn, a web designer, wrote in her comment on *The Coming Generational Storm* for the Barnes and Noble website that she had already been arguing with her mother about excessive Social Security benefits. “But then Congress went and passed the Medicare prescription drug benefits bill and I am now filled with rage.” There should be no mystery about the animosity that surrounds government programs: the use of force tends to provoke resentment. Liberals

THE PUBLIC VIEWS **GOVERNMENT AS DADDY WARBUCKS.**

in the welfare-state milieu that we have forgotten what government is. Strip away the obfuscation and what do you see? An agency that takes money by force from some people and gives it to others—or back to the payers. You can say that these transfers are fair, or that they are vitally necessary, or that our mothers would be ashamed of us if we didn’t make them, but it doesn’t change the facts. When people are taxed, they are not donating out of the kindness of their hearts. They are responding to the IRS’s threat to use violence against their person or property. Even if government gives some of your money back to you, it doesn’t change the fact that this is a coerced transfer.

The faith in government as a provider of goods and services extends far beyond the political Left. It is a mainstream national belief. For example, Kotlikoff and Burns unhesitatingly endorse the idea of a government-provided prescription drug benefit. “We agree 100 percent that the elderly need prescription drug insurance. And we think it should be a key part of Medicare.” They go on to say that, given the deficit, now is not the time to add this benefit. That’s like saying there is a Santa Claus and yes, he will leave presents, but it’s impolite to ask for them when he’s busy.

One sign of the prevailing naiveté about fiscal policy is the way people use

are familiar with this principle—that's why they don't believe in whipping children. But it never occurs to them that it applies to government spending programs. Accepting the image of government as a kindly provider, they overlook its coercive character.

The term "entitlement" itself indicates the popular confusion about government funds. The idea seems to have crept into the public mind that government is legally or morally obligated to make benefit payments. This might make sense if government were a person who could promise something and feel guilty about not living up to the promise. But it's not. It's an agglomeration of people. At one point in time, people like Franklin Roosevelt said, "Let's give pensions to everybody." How can that obligate congressmen from Idaho, Maine, and California 75 years later? Politicians have enough difficulty keeping their own promises. Why should we expect them to keep the promises of an earlier generation of politicians? All entitlement programs are simply pay-as-you-go welfare programs: they take money from some people and give it to others. They can be, and are, changed from year to year as political circumstances dictate.

Government officials know that people are embarrassed to take welfare. Therefore, starting with FDR, they have invented ways to disguise the character of these handouts. Social Security was made to seem like some kind of insurance contract, with its taxes misnamed "contributions" and the absurd rignarole of "earning histories" and "trust funds." Administrators of other handout programs, from cotton subsidies to student loans, have followed suit, marketing the government benefit as a citizen right, that is, a payment the government owes you. By and large they have succeeded in duping the public. Everyone now believes himself entitled to whatever benefits he gets. I have heard

The arrival of a new videotape by Osama bin Laden hard on the heels of a threatening tape by a self-described "American al-Qaeda" has alarmed some intelligence analysts.

The bin Laden tape portrays a healthy Osama standing behind a lectern and wearing a gold robe, typical of the formal wear of a Saudi prince. Although bin Laden made no specific threats and spent a good deal of time mocking President Bush, he clearly implied that there would be new attacks if policy changes do not take place. As bin Laden knew full well that U.S. Middle East policies are unlikely to alter no matter who is president, he was probably preparing his larger audience, the Muslim world, by providing justifications for his next attack. The tape was produced by the same al-Qaeda media facility that made the earlier American al-Qaeda tape. Analysts believe the American al-Qaeda is Adam Yahiyeh Gadahn. In the tape, Gadahn is prompted with questions by an off-camera voice that analysts have identified as Adnan Shukrijumah, operational planner for attacks against the United States. Gadahn works directly under Shukrijumah, who has reportedly been seen in Latin America and is the target of a massive FBI manhunt. Some intelligence analysts think that al-Qaeda is incapable of mounting a major attack now, but sources in the CIA's Counterterrorism Center believe that bin Laden always delivers on his threats. The appearance of two tapes in conjunction suggests that al-Qaeda might seek to launch a catastrophic operation soon after Bush starts his second term.



Assertions by the neoconservative translation group MEMRI that Osama bin Laden's videotape referred to threats against individual states in America that voted for Bush are in error. MEMRI incorrectly translated an Arabic word that was actually referring to "states" in the old Ottoman Empire sense—i.e., countries in the American sphere of influence, not component states in the U.S.



Britain has already warned the Bush administration that it will not permit itself to become involved in any military action against countries like Iran.

Even as Prime Minister Tony Blair was congratulating President George W. Bush on his electoral victory, British Foreign Minister Jack Straw responded to questions from the press about Iran, stating that there are no circumstances under which military action against Tehran would be justified. British sources believe that the Straw comment was a warning that Britain would not be willing to go along with any expansion of the Iraq conflict. There continues to be a great deal of speculation in intelligence circles that the United States will encourage Israel to attack nuclear targets inside Iran using the heavy bunker-buster bombs that were recently provided from U.S. arsenals. Critics of such a development note that Iran is fully aware of the threat and has dispersed its nuclear program to a number of sites that are deep underground, permitting it to reconstitute quickly and giving it an even stronger motive for developing nuclear weapons. Iran also has medium-range missiles that could strike back at Israel and has warned that it will use them if attacked.

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food stamp recipients say they are only getting back some of what they have put into the program in taxes.

Another sign of immaturity about fiscal policy is the almost complete ignorance of transaction costs in government-benefit systems. In engineering, everybody knows that you lose energy when you try to transfer it from one form to another. You may start with 100 kilowatt-hours of energy in a pile of coal, but by the time you've converted it to useable energy in a battery-powered car, you've only got two kilowatt-hours left. The same thing happens with government taxing and spending programs, only people don't notice it.

To illustrate the problem, compare the efficiency of two systems of providing drugs for seniors. In system A, you walk down the street to a drug store and buy the drug for \$100. In system B, government takes \$100 from you or from others in taxes and then provides you with the drug. Assuming you end up with the same drug in both cases, what is the true full cost of the government-provided drug? The way most people talk about government programs, it appears that they believe the answer is around \$100. They believe that government can tax and spend and lose hardly anything in the process.

A close look at the transfer process shows that this assumption is naïve. The waste in any government transfer system is enormous. One major burden is the cost of operating the tax system. Dollars that fund entitlement programs do not float effortlessly into the U.S. Treasury. Taxation is enormously expensive. The cost of running the IRS is but a tiny part of this burden. It includes all of the private-sector costs of record-keeping, learning about the tax code, and filling out tax returns. In 1995, the time component of this compliance burden was 10.2 billion man-hours. This is the equivalent of 5.5 million workers—the entire com-

bined labor force of Indiana, Iowa, and Maine—working all year on tax-compliance activities. In addition, there is the time and money wasted on audits, audit appeals, tax planning, tax shelters, tax litigation, and prosecutions.

Then there is the economic disincentive cost. When you try to take money from people by force, they change their behavior to avoid the impost. Investors save and invest less, entrepreneurs give up trying to start businesses, and employees work less. A few economists have begun to calculate this burden. According to their estimates, raising a dollar of revenue through the tax system causes the waste, or loss, of between 24 cents and \$1.65. Taking a conservative estimate for the disincentive cost (33.2 cents) and combining it with compliance and other costs, the overall cost of raising one dollar in taxes is 65 cents. So in the drug program illustration, before government has even thought about how to supply the drug, its \$100 per-person tax has made the average person \$165 poorer.

When government does get around to providing the service, it will face administrative costs and wastes. These include fraud, theft, and other kinds of abuse, as well as the overcharging, overpaying, and red tape so characteristic of government programs. A few economists have delved into this, looking at public and private provision of a wide variety of services, including trash collection, airlines, fire protection, and ship repair. They have come up with the “bureaucratic rule of two”: a government-provided service will end up costing about twice what the privately-provided service would cost. Applying this finding, we would estimate that the government-provided drug would cost around \$200. Add the \$65 in overhead tax collection costs, and we find that the true cost of the government-provided drug is about \$265.

This is only an estimate, of course. But it is one that errs, if anything, on the side

of understatement, for it leaves many costs out of the picture. The point is that most people, even many policy specialists, aren't aware of the magnitude of these costs. For example, Arthur Benavie, the economist who thinks Social Security is one happy family, praises the system because “The cost of administering the program is extremely low—less than 1 percent of the value of benefits it pays out, compared with 10 to 15 percent for most private insurance.” This statement seriously misrepresents the overhead cost of the Social Security program. The on-budget cost of the Social Security bureaucracy, which is what Benavie refers to, is but a tiny fraction of the full social cost of the program. This full cost includes the 65 percent overhead cost of taxation we just noted, plus the private sector costs of disbursing the subsidy. These include the waste of time and money in filling out forms, waiting in lines, and litigating for benefits, as well as economic disincentive costs (the program encourages people not to work). The overhead cost of Social Security is probably around 100 percent of benefits—vastly higher than even the most wasteful private pension arrangement. Other government spending programs, like Medicare and Medicaid, have even higher overhead costs.

Government systems that provide what you can buy for yourself entail a staggering destruction of wealth. They are the path to national economic ruin. In the long run, the country is going to have to face up to this economic reality and move away from government entitlement systems. We are probably moving in that direction, but there's going to be a lot of kicking and screaming along the way from a generation that thinks government is Kris Kringle. ■

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Arts & Letters

FILM

[*The Polar Express*,
The Incredibles]

Santa Claus & Superheroes

By Steve Sailer

A QUARTER BILLION DOLLARS worth of computer animation hits the theatres in Robert Zemeckis's Christmas pageant "The Polar Express" and Pixar's superhero action-comedy "The Incredibles."

Zemeckis has been overshadowed by his mentor Steven Spielberg, but a surprisingly strong case can be made that the 52-year-old is one of the greatest directors ever. Zemeckis has made terrific films in a variety of genres from the crass but viciously funny "Used Cars" to the all-American comedy "Back to the Future" to the nearly silent adventure "Cast Away." In "Who Framed Roger Rabbit?" and "Forrest Gump," he introduced technical breakthroughs while delivering old-fashioned satisfactions.

With "The Polar Express," Zemeckis spends \$160 million to attempt two innovations at once: to use motion-capture technology so Tom Hanks can act out five different characters, and to stay true to the tissue-thin story in Chris Van Allsburg's 1985 children's book. For once, unfortunately, Zemeckis overreaches.

Van Allsburg writes and paints the kind of hardcover picture books that win the Caldecott Medal, bedtime books that, at \$18.95 each, only grandparents can afford. This format tends toward bland multiculturalist fare of the *Lo-Ming* and *N!xau Celebrate Cinco de*

Mayo ilk that libraries feel obligated to buy, but Van Allsburg creates mysterious, sometimes sinister tales that kids actually enjoy.

When Van Allsburg's *Jumanji* was made into a 1995 Robin Williams picture, the paucity of his plot required the screenwriters to tart up the movie with an elaborate backstory. His *Polar Express* is even sketchier, consisting, along with his lovely but oblique paintings, of no more than a few hundred words. On Christmas Eve, a boy who is not sure he believes in Santa Claus anymore finds in front of his house a magic train that takes him to the North Pole where Santa gives him a bell from his sleigh.

Zemeckis adds a few characters, some rollercoaster action, and two musical numbers, but, on the whole, he stoically resists injecting conflict, motivation, humor, or even incident into the soporific storyline, which Van Allsburg devised, after all, to lull excited children to sleep on Christmas Eve.

Optical sensors recorded the adult actors' movements and then used this three-dimensional data to animate the children. That Hanks plays five characters, only one of whom looks remotely like him, is an amazing technological feat. That he is charming only as the most Tom Hanks-like character, however, suggests that there wasn't much point to this stunt.

The outdoor scenes are as gorgeous as you'd hope for \$160 million, but the blue reflections off the snow make the animated children's faces look clammy, giving them gray teeth.

While placid, the G-rated "Polar Express" is pleasant and unobjectionable. Its endorsement of the will to believe is in tune with the times. It's even mildly admirable for bucking the "War Against Christmas" waged by bureaucrats to replace Christmas with a diver-

sity-sensitive "Winter Solstice Holiday"—a top-down cultural revolution opposed by 50-million Christmas-loving children. Now *that* could inspire an exciting Christmas fantasy.

Brad Bird is just four years younger than Zemeckis and may be his equal in talent. He has an eye for movement that rivals Chuck Jones's. Yet Bird's career (consisting primarily of 1999's underpromoted "Iron Giant") has been as frustrating as Zemeckis's has been triumphant.

Bird pours his anger at the forces of mediocrity into the PG-rated (but wholesome) "The Incredibles," his sensational slam-bang tale—as overstuffed with fun as "Polar Express" is undernourished—of Mr. Incredible, a crime-fighting big lunk and his stretchy bride, Elastigirl, who are forced by predatory plaintiff's attorneys and growing political correctness into a government relocation program. "When everyone is special, no one is," grumbles the lovable *homo superior*.

Fifteen years later, they are trying to maintain a low profile in suburbia with a mortgage and three kids. Mr. Incredible works as a lowly claims adjuster who can barely squeeze his massive, but increasingly flabby, torso into his tiny cubicle.

Then the superhero business calls again, but does he dare tell Mrs. Incredible he's squeezing back into the old tights?

Superheroes normally have wards or nephews because real kids hate to imagine their own parents engaging in derring-do. Bird wisely sidesteps this by having the couple's daughter raise to her younger brother the specter of the only fate that scares modern children more than death—divorce: "Mom and Dad's lives could be in danger, or worse—their marriage!" ■

BOOKS

[*The Pentagon's New Map: War and Peace in the Twenty-First Century*, Thomas P.M. Barnett, Putnam, 385 pages]

Don't Say the (Other) N-Word

By James P. Pinkerton

IF YOU EVER find yourself wondering why Iraq has proved to be a quagmire, you might take a look at *The Pentagon's New Map* by Thomas P.M. Barnett.

The book's optimism is as bold as the administration's promises of Iraqi "jubilation" that we heard two years ago. Indeed, for those seeking a "new operating theory to explain how this seemingly 'chaotic' world actually works," the dust jacket assures us, "Barnett has the answers." But answers for whom? The book does not explain the world as it is; Barnett's two-variable analysis—people are driven by economics, except when they must be kept in line by American military force—has already been refuted by world events. Instead, the author answers a different, sneakier, question: how does one establish neoconservatism as the dominant politico-military paradigm—without using the word "neoconservative"? That is, how does one mainstream radical ideas, making them seem as normal and American as apple pie and PowerPoint?

Barnett's mission, seemingly, is to synthesize two strands of neoconservatism. One is the "conservative" interventionism of Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz and the Bush 43-ized Republican Party. The other strand, perhaps more important in Barnett's view, is the liberal interventionism of *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman and much of the Clintonized Democratic Party. To be sure, Friedman's economism, leading to utopianism, has

been discredited in the eyes of many, even before Iraq. Yet other Americans remain susceptible to a Barnett vision of the post-Cold War world—namely, a "grand strategy on par with the Cold War strategy of containment," a strategy in which the U.S. leads civilization against the dark forces of barbarism.

Barnett, a senior military analyst with U.S. Naval War College, is touted on the dust jacket as having "given a constant stream of briefings over the past few years, and particularly since 9/11, to the highest of high-level civilian and military policy-makers." And now, the jacket continues, "he gives it to you."

Actually, this briefing will cost you \$26.95. The U.S., meanwhile, has committed close to \$200 billion for the war in Iraq—which Barnett cites as "obviously" the first action item for his geostrategic plan—so why start pinching pennies now? A few hours spent with this book will leave the reader with a better understanding of how marchers of folly first put their boots on. In Barnett's case, it begins with a map of the world, a little jargon, a few factoids—and a brash theory unalloyed by judgment or historical perspective.

Yet Barnett appears to have influence in the U.S. government. In addition to his post at the Naval War College, he has also worked in the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Center for Naval

and Australia, plus Russia, China, and India. The Gap includes most nations of Central and South America, Africa, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia.

The great work of the 21st century, Barnett says, is for the "connected" Core countries to come to the rescue of the "disconnected" Gap regions. How to do this? One route is foreign aid, another is trade. Yet another route is the military—yes, armed intervention. That is, the Core must prove its systemic superiority by invading the Gap. Paying no mind to St. Augustine, Barnett explains, "My definition of just wars is exceedingly simple: They must leave affected societies more connected than we found them." In other words, perpetual war for perpetual connectivity.

So the ideal is globalization in all forms, by all means. Indeed, Barnett goes into full pompous-reverential mode to declare that Tom Friedman's 1999 book *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* is a "seminal volume." One might think of Barnett as Friedman with a security clearance. This Pentagon guru declares, "America's national interest in the era of globalization lies primarily in the extension of global economic connectivity." With that single thought in his head, restated endlessly across nearly 400 pages, he reduces all the complexity of the world down to one simplicity: whether or not countries are "connected."

BARNETT EXPLAINS, "MY DEFINITION OF JUST WARS IS EXCEEDINGLY SIMPLE: THEY MUST LEAVE AFFECTED SOCIETIES MORE CONNECTED THAN WE FOUND THEM." IN OTHER WORDS, PERPETUAL WAR FOR PERPETUAL CONNECTIVITY.

Analyses; if the Pentagon had disapproved of Barnett's bold title, presumably the brass could have stopped him from using it. Instead, they funded his work and even blurbed his book.

Barnett's Big Idea is to draw lines across the planet delineating the "functioning Core" and the "non-integrating Gap." The Core consists of the rich countries of North America, Europe, Japan,

And like Friedman, he never doubts that the U.S.—the worldwide history of failed colonialism notwithstanding—can reliably do the connecting.

In a weak moment, Barnett admits, "globalization's progressive advance will trigger more nationalism around the world, not less." Then he catches himself—the cure for the measles of nationalism, he insists, is more globalism.

"For each time we expand globalization's Functioning Core, we expand for all those living within it the freedom of choice, movement and expression." Prosperity, in other words, begets harmony.

But is affluence really the antidote to war? As Aristotle once observed, no tyrant ever conquered a city because he was cold and hungry. And the Stagyrite knew whereof he spoke: his pupil Alexander the Great suffered little deprivation in his Macedonian royal family. Yet Alexander's chosen form of "movement and expression" was to conquer the world.

But we haven't got to the real thrust of the book, which is that it's the mission of the Core—all united, of course, as one big connected and integrated family—to fill in the Gap, with treasure, blood, and the American way. This shiny, happy vision includes such unhappy Core-iors as France, Germany, and Russia. Indeed, Barnett even sees China as "a serious strategic partner in managing global stability." Do I hear the word "Taiwan"? Only by ignoring a dozen nuclear-edged feuds among the richer nations does Barnett get to the Friedman Station—to the terminus of a certain historical view, to the place where history ends because everyone is sitting peaceful and pretty. That is, if they are on the right side of the global tracks.

Because on the wrong side of the tracks, Barnett warns, lies a world of despair and danger. So even as the Core forms its multinational condominium, it must venture forth to slay the monsters. Barnett explains, "If the Core seems to be living the dream of Immanuel Kant's perpetual peace, then the Gap remains trapped in Hobbes' far crueler reality." As a result, America's globocop destiny is manifest: "American soldiers will end up being the tip of the spear."

If some of this is starting to seem familiar, that's because those ideas that were not cribbed from Friedman were taken from Wolfowitz.

Thus we come to "The National Security Strategy of the United States," released by the White House in September 2002. That document, on which Wol-

fowitz had been working while serving in the Bush 41 administration a decade earlier, asserted that the world now has only "a single sustainable model for national success: freedom, democracy, and free enterprise."

But since not everyone recognizes the blessings of this single model—aka the American Way—the U.S. should intervene as necessary to give history a

centuries of history and oceans of blood with his simplifying globalizing brush. "What makes suicide bombers possible?" he asks. The answer: "It's not the poverty, because most of the terrorists are middle class and educated. It's that they have no realistic expectations of a better life for themselves or their children." This economic-determinist dogma might amuse the late Mohammad Atta,

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HISTORY A SHOVE. OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM WAS THE **BETA TEST**.

shove. Operation Iraqi Freedom was the beta test for the new strategy. And although the war hasn't gone exactly as planned, President Bush continued to prove that theory often trumps reality, insistently describing Iraq as the first step on the long march to peace and freedom for the world.

Yet interestingly, the word "neconservative" never appears in this book's index. In fact, Barnett goes to great lengths to disguise the neocon-y nature of his argument. At one point, he launches into a reverie in which he claims to be "the real Fox Mulder," referring to the '90s TV show "The X-Files." Continuing in his self-dramatization, Barnett describes a sinister conspiracy inside the U.S. government: "Now the ZOG [Zionist Occupation Government, a term used by Timothy McVeigh types] conspirators basically have control of the Pentagon, with the Jews Paul Wolfowitz and Doug Feith running the show." The ZOG running the military? What are we supposed to make of that? One suspects that the purpose here is for us to have a good laugh, thus chuckling away legitimate concerns that perhaps neocon world-historical utopians are careening America over a cliff top.

The suspicion that Barnett is carrying heavy neocon baggage, however disguisedly, increases as he turns toward the Middle East; there he wipes away

the Egyptian-born ringleader of 9/11, who had made his way to affluent Germany before embracing al-Qaeda ideology. Nor would it explain the mysterious rise in suicide bombing in "liberated" Iraq, rising from, well, zero into the hundreds since the Connectivity Invasion. In fact, as Robert Pape of the University of Chicago has demonstrated, the single biggest factor in suicide bombing is the bombers' desire to drive out foreign occupiers. Pape goes unmentioned by Barnett.

Instead, Barnett plows ahead with his variable-less view of the world, leading him to dismiss all patriots everywhere as retrogrades: "When individuals cannot find opportunity in life, they are reduced to fighting over what's left over: the land and the cultural identity they attach to its history." Such nostalgic rootedness, he maintains, is only for losers. It's far better to "define a society by connectivity and the individual opportunities it provides." Then, Barnett cheers, "You will see that primordial attachment to the land disappear ... as mobility trumps tradition." So when that Great SUV-Day arrives, patriotism will become obsolete. And as for Americans, we can build condos atop Bunker Hill and pave over Gettysburg.

Barnett ends by offering a world-fixing to-do list: "ten steps toward this world worth creating." And although the

book was published just this year, it looks as though he might want to rework some of his presentation slides.

The first item on his list has already been tried: the Iraq War. Dutiful apparatchik that he is, Barnett lauds "our efforts to recreate Iraq as a functioning, connected society within the global economy." We feel no surprise there—although maybe his further prediction that "the Middle East will be transformed over the next two decades" needs to be tweaked a bit.

Item two on the list: apply the Iraq solution to North Korea. Writing with the jingoistic breeziness of someone who has never seen combat and never understood how a war turns out, Barnett announces, "Kim Jong Il must be removed from power and Korea must be reunited." He adds, "There is simply no good reason why Northeast Asia should put up with this nutcase any longer."

Of course, some might argue that the "good reasons" for negotiating with Pyongyang include its six to eight nuclear weapons. But if neoconservatism doesn't exist in Barnett's exoteric vocabulary, it's no surprise that realism doesn't feature in the text of his book.

Item three: Iran. Once again, Barnett sees regime change as a great idea. Echoing his neocon mentors, he wants to make "Iran the greatest reclamation project the world has ever seen."

Some might note that this list echoes George W. Bush's axis of evil. Indeed, Barnett is lavish in his praise of his commander in chief, even if it means trashing another Republican president: "I prefer comparing George W. Bush to Harry Truman rather than Ronald Reagan." Why is that? "Reagan didn't win the Cold War but had it handed to him on a silver platter." In other words, according to Barnett's revisionist history, the world situation that Ronald Reagan inherited from Jimmy Carter in 1981—Soviets occupying Afghanistan, NATO drifting toward defeatism, pro-Castro forces winning in Central America—presented nothing more than a silver-platter challenge.

So we think again of that one group of nominally conservative thinkers who argue that the Gipper is overrated. Yup, it's the neocons, the Straussian silent partners in Barnett's book. They're the ones who lump Reagan in with the quarter-century of American presidents before Bush 43 in order to support the claim that America's Middle East policy has been weak and morally cloudy since the fall of the Shah of Iran.

And what else does Barnett recommend? Faster immigration, please. Europe, he avers, needs to "move beyond 'guest workers' and into American-style encouragement of immigration flows." Indeed, "The right-wing anti-immigrant politicians need to be shouted off the political stage and pronto." Moreover, after encouraging Europe to become more like the U.S. on immigration policy, Barnett next encourages the U.S. to become more like the United Nations. In his dream scenario, the U.S. would merge with Mexico and by 2050, a "United States" president would be elected directly from the former Mexico. As Steve Sailer has noted, the neocon vision is a two-step: first, America invades the world; then, America invites the world.

America, meet Tom Barnett. Your government rates him as one of the best and the brightest. He endorses the radical world-remaking foreign-policy agenda of the neocons, although he won't quite come out and say it. Yet, lest anyone mistake him for a mere stooge of the neocons, he endorses a few nation-remapping ideas that are even more radical than anything the neocons have proposed, at least in public. So this would-be Clausewitz, writing from the bosom of the military-industrial-PowerPoint complex, demonstrates that the neocon bubble has yet to burst. If his book is any indicator of the future, then we ain't seen nothing yet. ■

James P. Pinkerton is a columnist for Newsday and a fellow at the New America Foundation in Washington, D.C. He served in the White House under Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush.

[*Adorno: A Political Biography*, Lorenz Jäger, trans. by Stewart Spencer, Yale University Press, 235 pages]

Bourgeois Radical

By Paul Gottfried

Lorenz Jäger's biography of Theodor Adorno (1903-1969) is a useful study of an unpleasant but influential figure. From the 1920s until his death, Adorno was the prime mover behind the aggregation of cultural and social iconoclasts known as the Frankfurt School. Together with his more down-to-earth co-organizer Max Horkheimer, who contributed family wealth to their enterprise, Adorno took his socially radical think tank, the Institute for Social Research, in 1934 from its interwar home in Frankfurt to New York and later Los Angeles.

In 1949, at the urging of Horkheimer, who was then rector at the University of Frankfurt, he returned to his native city to resume their research activities uncovering the bourgeois sources of "fascist" and "pseudo-democratic" pathologies. During their American wartime stay, the two friends also collaborated in the compilation of a bulky anthology of disquisitions dealing with the allegedly fascist mentality of the American population. This work, *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950), had far-ranging consequences for American educators and social reformers despite its turgid and preachy prose and the dubious proofs extracted by the authors from primitive interview techniques.

The Adorno depicted by Jäger was a man of many parts—a philosopher, a sociologist, a talented pianist, and an enlightening commentator on 12-tone music. His social radicalism took shape after the First World War but not for the reasons that his interpreters sometimes mechanically provide. Despite having a Jewish father—whose name, Wiesengrund, he

exchanged for his mother's maiden name, Adorno—it is hard to find evidence of the writer's exposure to anti-Jewish discrimination before suffering dismissal as a university instructor by the Nazis. Adorno was raised in a wealthy home as a Catholic and during his youth was deeply drawn to the religion of his French mother. Despite a professional setback under the Nazis, he was not personally harmed and freely left and then returned to Germany before deciding to immigrate to the United States. This fact should be duly noted in view of the unceasing references in Adorno's work, and in that of his colleagues and disciples, to an omnipresent Nazi danger, which they imagined to be well established in the United States.

After the war, Adorno praised the Soviet Union and the governments that it set up in Eastern Europe as an "anti-fascist necessity." Nonetheless, he made no effort to move to an "anti-fascist" place of refuge, and when he left his adopted country, which he scolded for its anti-Communist hysteria, he did so with documented reluctance. Moreover, notwithstanding his supposed loathing for bourgeois privilege, Adorno lived sumptuously to whatever extent his circumstances permitted. His "untimely death" (as his passing is described in *Yale Book News*) occurred while he was away from his wainscoted offices on a periodic visit to a resort near the Matterhorn. And for all his talk about the oppression of women in late capitalism, and despite his frumpy appearance (as revealed by the photo on the covers of both the German and English editions of this book), this feminist champion cheated persistently on his wife of many years, Gretel, who, if truth be known, looked less plain than he did.

Jäger's biography is the fairest and most accessible study known to me of this complex, obnoxious thinker. His German prose, which in the original text contrasts favorably to Adorno's, is a pleasure to read, and the English rendering is solid. As in his cultural commentaries, which appear in the *Frankfurter*

Allgemeine Zeitung, Jäger here shows considerable knowledge of music, an interest he shares with Adorno and one that might have drawn him to his subject. And though he goes through Adorno's major works of social criticism and correspondence with his soulmates, much of Jäger's work is on the aesthetic side of Adorno's life, which is least familiar to the radical scholar's American votaries.

As the dust jacket to the German edition explains, Adorno lives on as the social commentator who created the term and criticized the phenomenon of the "culture industry." He was among the first to have grasped as a social-historical critic the destructive power of consumerism in trivializing genuine literary and artistic accomplishments. Jäger shows with abundant quotations how Adorno came to view culture in his own time in much the same way that literary modernist Ezra Pound had, as an industrial commodity or consumer product. He also lets us know Adorno's shocked reaction upon returning to live in his native city of Frankfurt to the destruction wrought by Allied bombing. Jäger quotes his subject's dismay when he discovers that the church in which he had been confirmed, St. Catherine's, has been devastated, together with other local places of worship.

What for me is most remarkable about this biography is the measured way in which its author approaches his subject. Someone whose conservative Catholic convictions and revulsion for political correctness are evident in his other writings, Jäger could not possibly share Adorno's demonstrable contempt for bourgeois Christian society. Indeed, it is hard to read this work without noticing the prevalence of such contempt in Adorno's correspondence with other members of the Frankfurt School. The correspondents express their hostilities, which in some cases seem to stem from an ostentatious sense of Jewish marginality, in a variety of desperate radical positions, from hating their own country long before the Nazis rose to power to pouring affection on communist dictatorships.

Jäger also relates Adorno's involvement in a project undertaken for the U.S. High Commission soon after his return to Frankfurt, a series of group surveys intended to ascertain the "fascist sympathies" of Germans then undergoing American-led re-education. Adorno's chosen assistants, some of whom themselves had shady pasts in the Third Reich, blurred the distinction between Nazi sympathies and certain well-founded observations about the recent past. Germans who complained

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about the Allied bombing of civilian populations during the war or about vindictive American treatment afterwards, or who noted the harsh provisions of the Treaty of Versailles ending the First World War, were presumed to be sympathetic to Hitler or else mentally troubled German nationalists. But these damning observations were defensible, as Jäger makes clear, and were fully shared by former anti-Nazis, e.g., German Social Democratic leader Kurt Schumacher, who had spent the war years in a Nazi concentration camp. In his search for enemies on the Right, Adorno had become the shrillest voice of the American victors at the same time as he was defending Stalinist aggression in Eastern Europe.

But Jäger also documents that Adorno expressed the same attitudes and emotions that he condemned in his fellow Germans. He too was disturbed by the amount of rubble that the Allied bombing left behind. Moreover, he exhibited profoundly bourgeois taste in literature and art, an unfashionable aversion to Negro jazz, and a 19th-century sensibility that kept creeping into his aesthetic judgments. Jäger depicts in his subject a cultivated man of learning

who was at war with himself and whose internal conflict had a fateful impact on the lives of others.

In the late '60s, in a crisis that might have caused his physical deterioration and led to his death, Adorno was targeted by the student Left at the University of Frankfurt, who broke into and disrupted his classes. Like other revolutionaries before and since, this aging academic was accused of harboring reactionary impulses and of not sin-

that he, Goethe, and Adorno all enjoyed. By electing to end on this note, he is making a statement about what Adorno should be remembered for, namely, his appreciation of natural and artistic beauty.

But this really won't wash. What has been called "cultural Marxism" (inaccurately, given its lack of Marxist substance), and which flourishes in Europe and to a lesser extent here as political correctness, would be unthinkable with-

IN AN ORGY OF CONFUSED SYMBOLISM, FEMALE PROTESTERS BARED THEIR BREASTS IN ADORNO'S SIGHT WHILE WAVING PAGES TORN FROM HIS TRACT *NEGATIVE DIALECTICS*.

cerely opposing sexism. In an orgy of confused symbolism, female protesters bared their breasts in Adorno's sight while waving pages torn from his tract *Negative Dialectics*. Adorno had apparently not done enough to explore the dialectical possibility of shocking German burghers. Significantly, Jäger shifts away from this student unrest to a view of the Matterhorn as seen from the French Swiss region of Valais, a view

out Adorno and the Frankfurt School. Thanks largely, albeit not exclusively, to their activities, bourgeois normality, belief in God, and patriotism have come to be linked in academic culture and among social reformers to a slippery slope leading to fascism. Marxism, which had previously been primarily concerned with economic revolution, was transformed through Frankfurt School guidance into an unrelenting war against patriarchy, Christianity, and traditional community. By means of their translated writings and the infusion of their attitudes and grievances into American professional psychology in the 1930s and into pop social science thereafter, Adorno and his circle made themselves dramatically felt in the New World. (Since this reception was far more enthusiastic than American conservatives would like to believe, one may have to speak here of a natural fit rather than a deception.) In any case, it is hard to recall Adorno at this point in Western political life mostly for his learned essays on Beethoven and Arnold Schoenberg. Would that musicology were all he wrote! ■

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"My husband and I are getting along much better now. We're outsourcing our arguments to a couple overseas."

[*Adam's Curse: A Future Without Men*, Bryan Sykes, W.W. Norton & Company, 320 pages]

[*Y: The Descent of Men*, Steve Jones, Houghton Mifflin, 252 pages]

Endangered Species

By Kelly Jane Torrance

MEN ARE ON THEIR WAY OUT—the evidence is everywhere. Women live longer, and the longevity gap is growing. They now comprise the majority of undergraduate students in American universities. And with cloning attempts becoming ever more successful, commentators wonder how much longer the services of men will be needed.

Perhaps the fall of man was inevitable. At least that is the thesis of two recent books, whose titles do nothing to comfort. Bryan Sykes's *Adam's Curse: A Future Without Men* and Steve Jones's *Y: The Descent of Men* both argue forcefully that it is men who are the real second sex. On their face, both books suggest this is biological destiny. But woman's ascendancy, as Jones more readily recognizes, was won strictly through social manipulation.

Adam's Curse lays the blame on one microscopic thing—the Y-chromosome. Sykes, a leading geneticist, previously wrote *The Seven Daughters of Eve*, a bestseller detailing his research showing that nearly all Europeans could trace their lineage back to one of just seven women. After spending years focusing on mitochondrial DNA, which is passed down through females, he has now turned his eye to the part of DNA that only males have.

All fetuses start out female. After about a month, a hormonal bath can cause the profound change that will set a markedly different path through life. As Sykes so lucidly writes, "Sex is our principal badge, the first characteristic

of any sort of personal description." More central to our experience than race, class, or creed, sex affects almost every interaction we have with other human beings. "[W]hat exactly is it about this little chromosome that endows it with the power to decide between male and female, the deepest and most fundamental of all human differences and the cause of so much joy and pain, elation and suffering?"

We didn't know until 1959. One of the most exciting parts of Sykes's book is its account of the heady early days of genetics. It may seem odd to us now, with the promise of gene therapy just over the horizon, to read how desultory the field was in the early part of the last century. But it had never occurred to biologists that some diseases might have a chromosomal explanation. It was an ophthalmologist, in fact, who first conjectured in 1932 that Down Syndrome might have such a cause. The proof took 27 years—and came from a pediatrician who borrowed a microscope, camera equipment, and even running water from a nearby kitchen to conduct his paradigm-shifting research.

Geneticists never considered that the Y-chromosome had any purpose. It has none in fruit flies, after all. Scientists assumed that two X-chromosomes made a female, one X-chromosome a male, with the Y an irrelevant extra in the latter. The breakthrough came when researchers discovered that patients with Klinefelter Syndrome—males who have some feminine features—have two X-chromosomes along with their Ys. Clearly, the Y-chromosome makes the man.

Its purpose was discovered a mere 45 years ago and already its demise is envisaged. *Adam's Curse* is not just a history of the Y-chromosome but a prediction of its future—or lack thereof. Sykes confidently contends that one day his subject will be no more.

The argument rests on the special nature of the Y. Sexual recombination in chromosomes, as in humans generally, allows mutations to appear and also be repaired. Not so for the Y—it does not

recombine with a partner. The Y does have the ability to repair itself, to recombine internally. But this is nowhere near as good as sexual recombination—the possibilities for change are sharply diminished without any new information coming from a partner.

Add to that the fact that the Y is subject to more mutations than any other chromosome. Mutations spring up when DNA is copied as cells divide. The cells containing the Y-chromosomes for offspring are located in the testes, where they never stop dividing. The DNA in any woman's egg is only copied about two dozen times before it is released; the DNA in a 60-year-old man's sperm has been copied a thousand times. "When mutations hit vital genes they cause genetic diseases, and these damaging changes are ten to fifteen times more likely to happen in male germline cells than in their female counterparts," Sykes notes.

Think of that process happening over hundreds of generations, and it's easy to see why the Y-chromosome is "a genetic ruin, a wasteland littered with molecular wreckage." One mutation is already causing a greater degree of infertility in men. "One by one Y-chromosomes will disappear until eventually only one remains. When that chromosome finally succumbs, men will become extinct."

Chilling news. So how long do they have? Sykes guesses that the process will have concluded after about 5,000 generations, or 125,000 years. This is only an estimate, he stresses. But he is confident it will happen. Other species seem to have eliminated the Y-chromosome and survived, such as the mole vole.

A depressing thought for half the population—but appealing to Sykes. A self-hating male whose view of his sex permeates his book, Sykes connects maleness with everything that is wrong with the world. Like many geneticists, he anthropomorphizes his subject, describing a single-minded chromosome that will stop at nothing to replicate itself. This becomes laughable when, for example, he inexplicably blames the high

number of female fetuses aborted in China and India directly on the Y-chromosome.

War, pollution, the extinction of endangered species, all are the fault of men. "Gaia" is "suffering," Sykes insists. It's a wonder he can get out of bed in the morning, so heavy is his male guilt at the state of planet earth. "I have painted a very black picture of a world driven by the coupling of sexual selection working through its new playthings—wealth, power and greed—hand in hand with the Y-chromosome to deliver the present nightmare of patriarchal dominance, misery, poverty and destruction," he pronounces. The Y-chromosome's greedy goal of making itself dominant "is slowly but surely destroying our planet in ways we all know."

A world of women is a veritable utopia in this view. "Women only rarely commit violent crimes, become tyrants or start wars," Sykes notes. All true, perhaps (although that first is becoming less and less so). But it is also true that there are fewer female geniuses, fewer successful

female heads of state, and fewer female inventors. It is politically incorrect to say so, but Camille Paglia was onto something when she declared, "If civilization had been left in female hands we would still be living in grass huts."

It is exactly the dominating mechanism that Sykes derides that helped forge civilization. Men have always strived to conquer and create. And they have done so, in great part, to win the mating game. Studies show that even from the age of four, boys evince more risk-taking behavior than girls. This is not to say there are no female achievements, of course. In the art form of the novel, for example, women have at least equaled men, if not surpassed them. But it is ridiculous to complain about the control men have had over society without giving them their due for what they have created.

Sykes, however, seems unhappy with what they have created—endless prosperity, a constantly rising life expectancy rate, culture, science, and technology. But as he says after describing how the world will be imminently destroyed by war if something is not done soon, "This is a familiar litany to all of you and, other than as a geneticist, I have no particular qualification to comment on it." Sykes wouldn't be the first eminent scientist with bizarre ideas. The recently deceased co-discoverer of DNA Francis Crick, for example, believed that life on Earth began when seeds were spread here by an advanced extraterrestrial civilization.

Sykes isn't all wrong, though. There's little doubt that men no longer have the power they once did. But Steve Jones, another British geneticist, argues in *Y: The Descent of Men* that this state of affairs is the result of social factors not genetic destiny.

While *Adam's Curse* is written in a breezy, conversational style, *Y's* claims—though much more grounded in fact—come presented rather pretentiously, sometimes veering into the bizarre. On the subject of cloning, Jones writes, "Males, toward the end of the last millennium, felt a sudden tightening of

the bowels with the news that their services had at last been dispensed with." Such overwrought prose may cause a sudden tightening of the bowels.

Jones's book is a tour through the biology of maleness. "Ejaculate, if you are so minded and equipped, into a glass of chilled Perrier," he invites us in his first sentence. He also chronicles the desperate things men will do to hold onto that maleness. Sometimes his style actually works. The chapter "Hydraulics for Boys," on the physics of the penis, is perhaps the best in a book filled with interesting factoids on every page—did you know that some men born without a sense of smell have no attraction to women?

Jones, despite his precious style, has a more sophisticated understanding of how people become what they are. "Nobody claims that single genes are responsible for tall or clever people, and there is no more reason to do so when it comes to our diverse erotic interests," he avows. Some people are diabetic or clinically depressed because of the genes with which they are born, others suffer from these ailments because of the environments in which they live: "Male behavior is much the same."

Like Sykes, Jones confidently predicts the end of man. Men are "wilting away," he declares. But he is less sensational in his time frame—he believes it will take millions of years for the Y-chromosome to die out. For Jones, the real curse for men is not their biological destiny: "Gender differences have been consumed by social change. We are in the midst of an ascent of women matched with an equivalent descent of men."

And that is the real story here. Even Sykes admits that science could likely find a way to save the Y. It is not biology that men must worry about. It is a world that sees their accomplishment—civilization itself—merely as a long history of rape and pillage. ■

Kelly Jane Torrance is arts and culture editor of Brainwash and a books columnist for The American Enterprise Online.

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Revolting Elites



Babbitt is the idea that the average Joe lives within the passionless routine of marriage, the tyranny of consumerism, and the regimentation of

small-town civic life. Babbitt judges Joe to live in a benighted, blinkered spiritual state, a gay-bashing, beer-drinking redneck whose Taliban tendencies want to ban dancing, rock-and-roll, and R-rated movies. People who don't live in New York, Hollywood, or divide their time between Virginia, Hyannis Port, or Nantucket estates and their Georgetown mansions view the rest of us as Babbitts. Who can blame them? When was the last time, say, Tina Brown, spoke with anyone not famous? (Not for at least 30 years, since she was an unknown Jewish girl sucking up to Oxford Dons and Fleet Street journalists.) Tina comes to mind because of a recent name-dropping column of hers about dining with a bunch of heavy-weight media types discussing how to get rid of Bush. The only one who objected was the Hispanic busboy serving them drinks.

As one who did not endorse Bush, I was delighted with his victory, if only for the outrage it caused the *New York Times* and other "nattering nabobs of negativism," as my fellow Greek Spiro Agnew once called them. Let's start with the by now infamous headline of the London *Daily Mirror*, "How can 59,054,087 people be so DUMB?" For any of you who have never heard of the *Mirror*, it is a leftist British tabloid daily that sells in the millions and features keyhole exposés of minor celebrities, porn-star confessions, and traditional Elvis sightings. Here's how it described the 59-odd millions who voted for Bush: "The self-righteous, gun-totin', military-lovin', sister-marryin', abortion-hatin', gay-loathin', foreigner-despisin', non-

passport-ownin' rednecks, who believe God gave America the biggest dick in the world so it could urinate on the rest of us and make their land 'free and strong.'"

Well, it might not be very elegant—alas, there's nothing less elegant than British tabloids—but it's sure to the point. Babbitt lives, or at least that's how filthy-haired, yellow-teethed, whiskey-breathed, mostly queer, raincoat flashing British journalists see it. (Gee, it's catching.) Mind you, most of Europe went ape over the election, and it doubled my fun. There is nothing that gives me more pleasure than to listen to Europeans say "and if the Americans refuse to ... we will have to ..." Have to do what? Have Brussels declare war? Cut off diplomatic relations? Refuse to sell weapons? European threats can make a man laugh out loud during a rainy Sunday evening in Belfast.

Mind you, smug Europeans have nothing on smug American so-called elites. My friend Liz Smith described the post-election atmosphere as "The New Civil War! The East and West coasts break off from the red states and form their own more perfect union made up of intellectuals, show-biz and poor folks." (Surely the latter is a mistake, dear Liz. You meant poor in morals and manners rich folk.) It is as rare for show-biz and media folk to know any poor folk as it is to find a man who went to bed with Paris Hilton and did not videotape it.

The *New York Times* felt it had to help its readers get over their depression by running an advice piece on how to cope with a second Bush presidency. "After all, medical studies have shown that

anger can lead to heart disease ..." Well, here's some good news at last. *Times* columnists like Paul Krugman and Maureen Dowd are soon to be diagnosed with heart trouble, that is, if the paper of record has it right for a change.

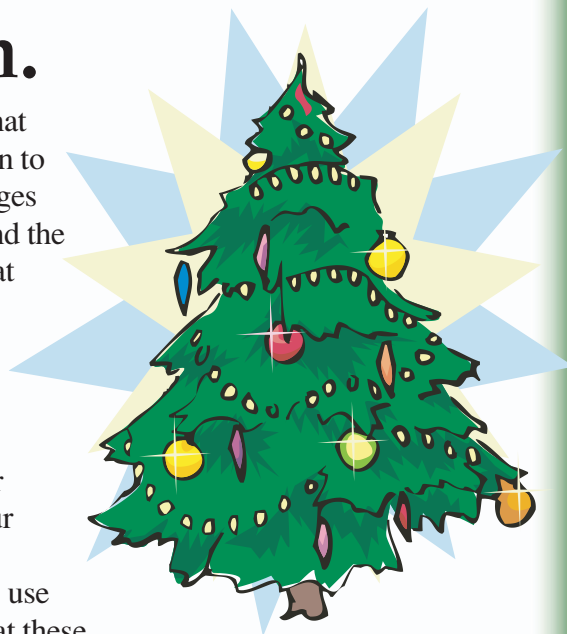
Garry Wills, writing in the *Times*, took the high road under the title "The Day the Enlightenment Went Out." Wills muses that Muslim zealots and those who voted for Bush are one and the same. "It is often observed that enemies come to resemble each other. We torture the torturers, we call our God better than theirs ..." Good old Garry Wills, he does have a hell of a point. Harvey (disgusting) Weinstein, Whoopi (foul-mouthed) Goldberg, Michael (slob) Moore, George (schemer) Soros, and the rest of what John Tierney called the "Water versus Earth" people, do resemble the imams preaching hatred and intolerance—certainly where physical ugliness is concerned. (If you put a towel on Michael Moore's head he'd look like any fat slob preacher in Saudi.)

My favorite was "Coping," yet another *New York Times* advice column, by one Anemona Hartocollis. "For some parents, the urge to leave the country was a gut feeling, like the one that tells people it's time to move to the suburbs." Anemona, I feel for you, and I agree. If only some of your bosses would skip the place it would make for a better country. But leave it to Hollywood to have the last word. Susan Sarandon claimed on a nincompoops' TV show that Bush won because there was massive electoral fraud. The election was stolen, according to Ms. Sarandon, which I guess proves that 59 million people are not only dumb, they are also a cheatin' bunch of no-goods who deserve what they're about to get in the next four years. Go figure, as they used to say in Brooklyn before the Taliban took over. ■

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